SAUNDARYA LAHARI

SAUNDARYA-LAHARĪ

of

Śrī Śankarācārya

Sānskrit Text with
Transliteration, Translation and
Notes based on
Lakṣmīdhara's Commentary
By

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Preface to the First Edition

Saundaryalaharī, the great hymn of Śrī Śaṅkara, dealing with the cult of Mother worship, is the most popular Sanskrit hymn of its kind. In South India, especially, it is studied not only by practitioners of Śrī-Vidyā, but learnt by heart and recited in a devotional spirit every day by persons who know no Sanskrit at all.

The Divine Mother is worshipped and meditated upon in many aspects. In this Text She is adored in Her creative aspect under the name Tripurā, which means the Mother who embodies the three Bindus or creative stresses. The first fortyone verses, which are the source of various Mantras, deal chiefly with the Śrī-Cakra, which is called the Abode of Śiva-Śakti and which forms the special symbol of worship for devotees of the Devi. The Mantra of Tripurasundarī, who is invoked in this hymn, and also the subject of Kuṇḍalinī Yoga which is a part of the Vidyā, are dealt with in the Text.

The subject matter of Saundaryalaharī will thus be found to be highly technical, dealing with matters that are not given much publicity. For the Mantras and the ways of adoration that are advocated in it have to be learnt by a competent student from a competent teacher who is a Sampradāyavit—or one who is in the right spiritual descent and is well-acquainted with the traditions of the cult. It should therefore be understood that the object of translation of a Text like this and comments expounding its meaning is only to give an intellectual understanding of the Vidyā embodied in the Text, which is recited by large numbers of people without any understanding of the meaning. Those who want to practise must seek a true Guru who is a Sampradāyavit, and take to the practice of disciplines under his instruction.

We are specially indebted to Sri Anna N. Subramanian, a well-known authority on the subject of Śrī-Vidyā, for the valuable Foreword he has given, setting forth the traditions of Śakti worship.

Sri Ramakrishna Math
Madras
1 March 1987

Publisher

FOREWORD

Swāmi Tapasyananda of the Ramakṛṣṇa Math has rendered a signal service to the cause of Śakti worship by bringing out this excellent edition of the famous Text, the Saundaryalaharī, with the original in Sanskrit, its transliteration, English translation, and elaborate notes, for the benefit of the English-knowing public. .

The meaning of the dictum 'Truth is Beauty and Beauty Truth' is expounded in the hundred verses of the Saundaryalaharī. What is described as 'Śāntam-Śivam-Advaitam' in the Upaniṣad, is revealed here as the ultimate perfection of beauty and its adoration.

The origin of Śakti worship can be traced to such Vedic texts as Śrī-Sūktam, Durgā-Sūktam, Bhū-Sūktam, Bahvrcopaniṣad, Tripuropaniṣad, Bhāvanopaniṣad and other Devī Upaniṣads. In Sandhyā Upāsanā, we think of Gāyatrī Devī in the solar orb and imagine that the sun shines by Her effulgence and that She is also the Truth which has kindled the light of reason in our minds. Her praise is sung thus in the Mantra, 'Āyātu Varadā Devī': "To those who adore Thee, O Mother, Thou grantest all boons. Thou art the origin of the Vedas and of all the worlds. Be pleased to shine in my heart and accept my adoration. Thou art effulgence. Thou art the light of the Devas and Thou art in everything and beyond everything. Bathe me in Thy light and purify me." A little reflection will thus show that the daily Sandhyāvandana enjoined by the Vedas is primarily Śakti worship.

In the Mahābhārata, there is reference to Śakti worship in many contexts. Before entering the Matsya kingdom for spending the last year of exile incognito, Dharmaputra prays to Durgā. At the commencement of the battle of Kurukṣe-

tra Srī Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to get down from the chariot and to pray to Durgā, and Arjuna does so.

In most of the Purāṇas, the importance of Śakti worship is alluded to. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, we see Rukmiṇī worshipping at the shrine of Ambikā before her marriage. The Devī Bhāgavatam deals entirely with the glory of the Divine Mother. The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa contains Lalitā Sahasranāma and Triśatī with detailed instructions regarding modes of Devī worship. Caṇḍi or Devī Māhātmyam forms part of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa. Then we have the vast literature consisting of Āgama, Rahasya, Samhitā, Yamala, Arṇava and Tantra with their numerous commentaries which codify the methods of Śakti worship and explain its philosophy. Referring to the Śākta Tantras, which are sixtyfour in number; the Saundaryalaharī says that after Śiva had filled the world with the other Tantras, He gave out, at the request of Devī, the Śrī Tantra which fulfils the objects covered by all the other Tantras, and this is known as the worship of Tripurā or Śrī-Vidyā.

We are told that Dattātreya, seeing that the Upāsanā of Tripurā is considered the highest of all modes of worship and that its effects includes the benefits of the other modes too, composed the Datta-Samhitā, comprising 18,000 verses in which the worship of Tripurā is laid down in all its details. From him, Paraśurāma learnt the Samhitā and abridged it in the form of 6,000 Sutras. His pupil, Sumedhā, made an abridgement of the Samhitā and the Sūtras in the form of a dialogue between Datta and Rāma. It is this abridgement that is known as Paraśurāma Kalpa Sūtra. Śakti worship in the South is mainly on the lines laid down therein. Umānandanātha, a disciple of Bhāskararāya, composed in 1775, the Nityotsava, clarifying the methods of worship according to the Sūtra. A later scholar, Rāmesvara Śāstrī,

a disciple of Bhāskararāya, wrote a succinct gloss of the Sūtra by name 'Saubhāgya-Subhodaya. Bhāskararāya himself in his book called 'Setu-bandha,' which is a commentary on Nitya-ṣoḍaśikārṇava of Vāmakesvara Tantra, and also in his Lalitā-sahasranāma Bhāṣya and Varivasyā Rahasya has expounded the methods and philosophy of Śakti worship. These three works of Bhāskararāya are considered the Prasthāna Traya of Śrī-Vidyā.

The worship of Devī in Śrī-Cakra is set forth by Ādi Śaṅkara in his Prapañcasāra and Saundaryalaharī, and this form of worship occupies a high place in the traditions of the Maths organized by him. In Tamil, we have expositions of Śakti Mantras and Upāsanās in 'Tirumantram' of Tirumoola Nāyanār and in later day works like 'Abhirāmi-Antādi.' The works of Arthur Avalon in English have thrown a flood of light on Śakta philosophy and practice, and removed misconceptions which prevailed previously. The writings of Sri Aurobindo and his followers have also contributed to a better understanding of the subject. Kāvyakanṭha Gaṇapati Śāstri, a disciple of Sri Ramaṇa Maharṣi, has written a book of Sūtras called Daśa-Mahā-Vidyā or the worship of Kālī, Tārā, Sundarī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chinnamastā, Dhūmavatī, Bagalā, Mātaṅgī and Kamalā'tmikā. The Guhānanda Maṇḍali in Madras has done pioneering work in recent times in removing the cobwebs that had gathered round the Śākta Cult and in popularizing it in its pure form.

Numerous are the places of Śakti worship. Śakti is adored as Umā in the Himālaya, as Ambā in Kāṣmir, as Viśālākṣī in Vārāṇasī, as Gaurī in Kanyā Kubja, as Bhavānī in Mahārāṣṭra and as Kālī in Calcutta. At Kanyā Kumārī, the southern extremity of Bhārata Varṣa, Śakti is worshipped as Bālā, in Madurai as Mīnākṣī, Mantriṇī or Śyāmalā, at Jambukeśvaram as Akhilāṇḍeśvarī or Dandinī, and at

Kāñcīpuram as Kāmākṣī or Mahā-Tripurasundarī. She is worshipped as Śāradā at Śringeri, as Cāmuṇḍesvarī in Mysore and Bhagavatī in Kerala. On the outskirts of each town and village in South India, She is worshipped as Bhadrakālī in unpretentious temples as the guardian deity or Ellayamman, animal sacrifice being permitted there in olden days. She is adored as Durgā-Lakṣmī-Sarasvatī (three in one) generally during Navarātrī, in every household. In whatever form She is invoked, She is One, the Mahā-māyā or Parabrahma-Mahiṣī. Śaṅkarācārya says in Saundaryalaharī: "O Parabrahmamahiṣī! The knowers of Veda call you Vāk-Devatā the consort of Brahmā, Lakṣmī the consort of Viṣṇu, and Pārvatī the consort of Śiva. But Thou art the Fourth (Turīya) of inconceivable and limitless majesties—the indeterminable Mahāmāyā who revolves the wheel of this world."

Though there are striking differences between the practices and modes of worship of Śakti followed in the North and the South of India, the two are not contradictory, but complementary. Pointing to the tepid gore that flowed from the decapitated trunks of goats at the Kālī Temple of Kālighāt, Calcutta, a Western lady disciple asked Swami Vivekananda, "Well, Swami, why so much blood?" Swamiji gravely replied: "Is not a little blood necessary to complete the picture?"

Even in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we can trace these two approaches. Kṛṣna is not merely 'Veṇugopāla' or 'Gopījana-Vallabha' with a flute on his lips and a garland on his neck, but is also Kāla the Destroyer. In the Viśvarūpa of the Lord, Arjuna sees His terrible form. The Lord does not say, "I will not send you misfortune", but He says that He would give the strength to bear them when they come. In fact, He seems to have reserved the greatest trials for His dearest devotees. The hero can face, the world with all its

terror and hideousness and not curse God for it. He looks upon the sweet smile as well as the dark frown of Nature as the manifestations of the same Divinity. God is not only the Lord of creation but also the Lord of destruction. His divine hand is everywhere, in birth as well as in death, in health as well as in disease, in peace as well as in warfare, in the liquid beauty of the full moon as well as in the pitchy darkness of a cold wintry night. The sweet smile as well as the angry frown, both belong to the same God. It is therefore said in the Devī Māhātmyam, She is Goddess Lakṣmī reigning in the house of the fortunate and She is again the ill luck in the house of the sinner. She is the intelligence of the wise, the Śraddhā of the pious and the modesty of the virtuous woman.

In the Southern cult of Śrī-Vidyā the Divine Mother is mostly worshipped in Her aspect as Lalitā Mahā-Tripurasundarī. The Devi is to be meditated upon as of a ruddy complexion, with eyes expansive as an ocean overflowing with waves of grace, with a noose, a goad, arrows of flowers and a bow of sugarcane in Her hands, surrounded by Aṇimā and other deities, and ultimately as one's own self. The process of worship consists of Bhūta-Śuddhi, several kinds of Nyāsa, Prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā, Japa, Mānasa-pūjā, Āvaraṇa-pūjā, Arcanā, Dhūpa, Dīpārādhanā, Naivedya, Nīrājana, Stotra, Kāma-kalā-dhyāna, Homa, Balidāna, Suvasinī-pūjā, Samayikā-pujā and Tatva-śodhanā. The worship is done in the image of the Devī as well as in the Śrī-Cakra otherwise known as Śrī-Yantra.

Mantra, Yantra and Tantra form the three corners of the triangle of Śrī-Vīdyā. Mantra is visualized in the Yantra. The worship of the Yantra, internal and external, and the practice of Kuṇḍalinī Yoga and other Sādhanas constitute the Tantra or modus operandi. The chief Mantra of Śrī-

Vidyā is Pañca-daśāksarī, and the chief Tantra is the meditation on the identity of Mantra, Yantra and Tantra with the Devī Herself. If Śakti worship is done with understanding and appreciation and with love in the heart, then Mantra, Yantra, offerings, the procedure and paraphernalia of Pūja are all transformed into forms and expressions of Cit-Śakti. The object is to effect the transformation of the materials and acts of ordinary experience into forms revealing the play, the power and the bliss of the Divine Mother. The Saundaryalaharī says that if the worshipper practises Ātmārpaṇam, ordinary talk is converted into Japa, normal work with the hand becomes Mudrā, walking becomes Pradakṣiṇa, eating becomes Homa, lying down Praṇāma—in fact whatever action is naturally done is transformed into worship.

The Śrī-Vidyā Upāsaka should follow certain disciplines. He should not find fault with other paths or criticize them, while being steadfast in his own. The practice of Japa should go on as an under-current at all times. He should not ask for favours or accept them. He should do his duties in the world and the worship of the Deity without attachment to fruit. He should be fearless. He should not acquire wealth and possessions with the motive of selfish enjoyment and he should consider nothing as higher than realization of the Self.

Śakti worship properly understood is a synthesis and harmony in which diverse and sometimes conflicting tendencies of human endeavour have been accommodated and each in union with the rest has been assured its fullest development and satisfaction. An adept in Śrī-Vidyā can be a Śākta at heart, a Śaivite in outlook and a Vaiṣṇavite in practice. That such a reconciliation is not only possible but necessary was revealed to us in Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, the Avatāra Puruṣa of the age. He has proved that all paths pursued with

devotion lead to the one God, that Mantras are efficacious, that Yantras are potent, that Devatās and higher powers exist, that Siddhis do come and that step by step the Divine Mother leads the Sādhaka to higher and higher levels of perfection till he reaches the goal.

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa says: "That which is Brahman is also Kālī, the Mother, the Primal Energy. When inactive, It is called Brahman. Again, when creating, preserving, and destroying It is called Śakti. Still water is an illustration of Brahman. The same water, moving in waves, may be compared to Śakti or Kālī. What is the meaning of Kālī? She who communes with Mahā-Kāla, the Absolute, is Kālī. She is formless and, again, She has forms. If you believe in the formless aspect, then meditate on Kālī as that. If you meditate on any aspect of Hers with firm conviction, She will let you know Her true nature. Then you will realize that not merely does God exist, but He will come near you and talk to you, as I am talking to you. Have faith and you will achieve everything."

The ultimate Reality is Sat-Cit-Ānanda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The Essence in man is identical with this Reality but under the influence of Māyā, he has forgotten his true nature. He takes to be real a merely apparent world of subject and object, and this error is the cause of his bondage and suffering. The goal of all spiritual practice is the re-discovery of his true identity with the Reality. For the achievement of this goal Vedanta prescribes an austere method of discrimination and renunciation. The way is, 'Neti Neti', to negate the Asat or unreal Upādhis. If the Upādhis are eliminated through service to a Guru and proper enquiry, one realizes the identity of the Jivātman and Paramātman. But this is not so easily done. Sri Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad Gītā, "The difficulty of those whose thoughts

are set on the unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the unmanifested Brahman is hard to reach for embodied beings (who are attached to their bodies)." Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa says, "It is God Himself who makes us feel this difference, and on account of this difference, one sees man and woman, light and darkness, and so on. As long as one is aware of this difference, one must accept Śakti the Personal God. It is God who has put 'I-consciousness' in us. You may reason a thousand times; still this 'I' does not disappear. Therefore, as long as a man is conscious of 'I' and of differentiation, he cannot speak of the attributeless Brahman but must accept Brahman with attributes. This Brahman with attributes has been declared in the Vedas, the Purāṇas, and the Tantra, to be Kālī, the Primal Energy." This is the justification for combining philosophy with rituals and meditation with ceremonies. Whereas the Vedantic method of enquiry is one of rejection and eliminaion, the Tantric method is one of acceptance and sublimation. Śakti worship is a means of elevation of the consciousness, using even base materials as help, following the lead of one who has tried the experiment before and succeeded. The very poison that kills is transmuted into the elixir of life. In the process of worship, the order in which the Tattvas are evolved is reversed. From the gross, one proceeds to the subtle, from the outer Bhūpura of the Śrī-Cakra to the Bindu, the central point. By this practice one is enabled to awaken the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti lying coiled in the Mūlādhāra, at the base of the spinal column. Kuṇḍalinī is a universal principle. Having evolved the complex apparatus of every object, Kuṇḍalinī coils herself up at the centre of the apparatus and remains at the static, nuclear basis and also as its magazine of power to draw and fall back upon. One must help oneself by drawing from this power to become free from the bonds under which one

groans. Even if one does not consciously or deliberately set oneself to the task of rousing the Kuṇḍalinī, She will be roused by the power of Bhakti or Jñāna and by the disciplines of the Upāsanā one practises, if one follows them with faith. This was demonstrated in the life of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa. He actually saw the Power ascending along the Suṣumnā Canal and the six centres to the thousand petalled lotus at the top of the head. This phenomenon was accompanied by visions and trances. Later on, he described to his disciples and devotees the various movements of the Kuṇḍalinī, fish-like, bird-like, monkey-like, and so on. The awakening of the Kuṇḍalinī is the beginning of spiritual consciousness, and its union with the Supreme Spirit in the Sahasrāra is the consummation of Śakti worship.

Swami Tapasyanandaji has explained with great lucidity the philosophical background of Saundaryalaharī, clearly showing the differences in some of the philosophic conceptions of the Samaya and Kaula forms of Śakti worship. The present publication is an invaluable addition to Śākta literature, which is the field of practical religion.

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24th April 1986

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

There are several other translations of the Saundaryalaharī in English, but most of them are out of print or beyond the reach of ordinary readers. The Text is highly technical, but yet many, especially in South India, recite it as a matter of pious religious duty, without understanding its meaning. The object of this work is to give to such devotees an intellectual understanding of its meaning — intellectual only, because it deals with the highly technical subject of the Upāsanā (adoration) of Śrī-Vidyā, which can be performed only by one who is initiated into it by a representative teacher of an authentic tradition of the Vidyā.

For the benefit of those who do not know Devanagari, we have given the transliteration of the verses in Roman script with diacritical marks. The sound equivalents of the letters having diacritical marks are given in a table. The hyphens given in the Devanagari script have no grammatical significance, nor do they indicate any stop of continuity while reading. They are given only for making it easy for reading by those who are not very familiar with this script.

The Notes are based mainly on the most recondite commentary on the Text by Lakṣmīdhara, who was a great scholar-devotee attached to the Court of the Mahārāja Gajapati-Vīra-Pratāpa-Rudra, who ruled in Cuttack, Orissa, during 1466-1539. The views of some who differ from him on some important points are also given here and there in the Notes.

We are very much indebted to Sri Anna. N. Subramanian of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home,

Madras, for the very profound and meaningful Foreword he has given to this book, and for going through the manuscript and the proofs also. He is a well-known teacher of the Vidyā and is very thorough with the subject in its theoretical and practical aspects. But for the very substantial help given by him through a careful scrutiny of the Introduction, Notes and Translation, we would have felt great hesitation in bringing out this book which deals with a highly technical work of the great Srī Śaṅkarācārya.

1st May, 1987. *Translator.*

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

	Sounds like		
अ	a-o in son	ड	ḍ-d it den
आ	ā-a in master	ढ	ḍh-dh in godhood
इ	i-i in if	ण	ṇ-n in under
ई	ī-ee in feel	त	t-t in Three
उ	u-u in full	थ	th-th in thumb
ऊ	ū-oo in boot	द	d-th in then
ऋ	ṛ-somewhat between r and ri	ध	dh-then in breathe
ए	e-ay in May	न	n-n in not
ऐ	ai-y in my	प	p-p in pen
ओ	o-o in oh	फ	ph -ph in loop-hole
औ	au-ow in now	ब	b-b in bag
क	k-k in keen	भ	bh-bh in abhor
ख	kh-ckh in blockhead	म	m-m in mother
ग	g-g (hard) in go	य	y-y in yard
घ	gh-gh in log-hut	र	r-r in run
ङ	ṅ-ng in singer	ल	l-l in luck
च	c-ch (not k) chain	व	v-v in avert
छ	ch-chh in catch him	श	ś-sh in reich (German)
ज	j-j in judge	ष	ṣ-sh in show
झ	jh-dgeh in hedgehog	स	s-in sun
ञ	ñ-n (somewhat) as in French	ह	h-in hot
ट	ṭ-t in ten	ं	ṁ-m in sum
ठ	ṭh-th in ant-hill	:	ḥ-h in half

INTRODUCTION TO SAUNDARYA-LAHARĪ

Authorship

The great Ācārya Śaṅkara was both the Bhāsyakāra or the commentator on the three foundational texts of Vedānta philosophy and also the San-mata-sthāpaka, the founder of the six *matas* or devotional modes centering on six conceptions of the Supreme Being. Though pure philosophers may find some contradiction in this coexistence of philosophy and allegiance to a personalistic form of worship (or cult)[1] in one and the same thinker, Indian spiritual tradition, both Hindu and Buddhistic, finds no such contradiction in such a combination. Srī Rāmānuja was a very great philosopher, but he was a devoted advocate of Vaiṣṇavism. So were other Ācāryas like Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka etc. In the Buddhist tradition, the greatest of its philosophers, Nāgārjuna of Śūnyavāda fame, was also one of the great teachers of the devotional mode of Prajñā-pāramitā. In modern times Svāmī Vivekānanda, who was the great apostle of Advaitism, declared that Kālī worship was hiș speciality. The Ācāryas, in fact, were not mere intellectual gymnasts like many of the Western philosophers. They understood that Principle and Personality have to go together if man's spiritual life is to move on even keel, that the highly philosophic Ātma-Brahman doctrine of the Vedānta has to be clothed in a personal conception of the Deity, if it is to be of any significance to the ordinary man.

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[1] The word 'cult' has gained a very narrow and unwholesome meaning in modern usage in some parts of the English-speaking world. But the word is used here only in the sense of 'the personalised conception of the Deity.' It is the only compact expression available in English.

Nay, the Upaniṣads go further. Says the Śvetāśvatara: "*Yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ yathā deve tathā gurau | tasy'ete kathitā hy'arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ* — this doctrine shines as an enlightenment only when imparted to a man who has supreme devotion to the Deva (i.e. the Divine Person) and equal devotion to the Teacher who imparts this knowledge."

It is only in the light of this peculiarity of the Indian spiritual tradition that we can understand how the Vedāntic philosopher Śaṅkarācārya could also be the composer of great hymns devoted to the important personalised conceptions of the Deity adored in this country—Viṣnu, Śiva and Śakti. The verses of Saundarya-laharī, though in conformity with Advaitism (Non-duality), differ in many respects from the Kevalādvaita, as the doctrine of Advaitism developed by Śrī Śaṅkara in his Bhāsyas has come to be called in later times. Saundarya-laharī is his most important hymn devoted to Śakti, and it forms a fundamental text of the Śākta cult, which propagates the worship of the Supreme Being as the Mother of the universe, with a philosophic background of its own which is Advaitic but absolutely realistic.

Tradition maintains even a quasi-divine authorship to this hymn and gives Śri Śaṅkara only the credit of transmitting it to mankind. It is said that Śrī Śaṅkara in the course of his short life disappeared from the earth for a time while staying at Vārāṇasi. He transported himself to Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva. There on a wall he found this great hymn written. He began to read it, but as he read it, Gaṇeśa, the offspring of Śiva, began rubbing it from below, lest this great sage should publicize this highly esoteric hymn in the world of men. So Śrī Śaṅkara could master only the first forty one verses, and in place of what had been erased, he composed an addi-

tional fifty-nine verses, and made it a full text of 100 verses and published it in the world of men

There is a marked difference between these two sets of verses. The first forty one are dealing with the Mantra, Yantra, and the other partly philosophical and partly ritualistic ideologies of the Śākta cult as also with the mysteries of Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. This portion is called Ānandalaharī, the Flood of Bliss. The fifty-nine verses that follow give a description of the form of the Devī utilising most of the figures of speech (*Alaṅkāras*) known to Sanskrit poetics. It is this portion that is, strictly speaking, Saundarya-laharī (Inundation of Beauty), although popularly the whole hymn is now known by this name.

Philosophical Dichotomy

Apart from the unlikelihood of a great Advaitic philosopher being the author of a devotional hymn, there is an allied internal evidence of a purely philosophic nature that militates against accepting the traditional view attributing the hymn to Śrī Śaṅkara. Though the Śākta philosophy and Śrī Śaṅkara's philosophy expounded in his great commentaries, known in later times as *Keval'ādvaita,* are both non-dualistic (Advaitic), there are also radical differences between them. While the Advaita of Śri Śaṅkara achieves unity by the sublation of the 'many' as a mere appearance, the Śākta Advaitism seeks to obtain this by recognising in the 'many' a real manifestation of the One. All Vedānta philosophy is an attempt at the solution of the problem of the One and the Many. The kingpin of Śaṅkara's Advaita system is the doctrine of Māyā and the division of Reality into the *Paramārtha* (metaphysical) and the *Vyavahāra* (empirical). The Māyā doctrine maintains that the non-dual Being is the

only real existence (*Paramārthika*) while the 'many' are only the appearance (*Vyavahārika*) of it conjured up by ignorance. Appearance means that the objects experienced are not actually there while they are experienced (*Mithyā*). All the time the multiplicity is experienced, the non-dual reality alone has been in existence. A snake experienced on a rope in comparative darkness is given as an example of this philosophical doctrine. The implication of this doctrine is, therefore, that creation and created objects have never been in existence (*Ajāti*), and that one says these are there, only because of ignorance which corresponds to the darkness which leads to the perception of a snake in the rope. By explaining the phenomenal world in this way, Śaṅkara achieves the non-duality and the immutablity of the one Existence; but in the eyes of a critic, this is achieved only by compromising the non-dual oneness of Reality; for he has to admit an entity called Ignorance which must necessarily be separate from that non-dual existence. If for any reason it is said to exist in the non-dual existence then it will be admitting Svagata-bheda (internal difference) in the non-dual existence, and if it is regarded as separate, dualism comes in. Besides, in the light of this doctrine both bondage and liberation and the spirit seeking liberation become all unreal. As a critic of Advaita has humorously put it, all the teachings of the 'Śāstras about liberation become like consolation given to a sterile woman on the death of her son.'

In contrast to this version of Advaita, the Śākta school maintains that the non-dual unitary Existence has an internal polarity which is only a distinction without a difference. The non-dual Brahman is not only Pure Being but Pure Will also. It is Being-Will. Though these are separately spoken of, they are just like fire and its heat, which form one and the same entity. The concept of Being without Will is as good

as a Nihil (*Śūnya*) and Will without Being is a fictitious assumption. So according to Śākta doctrine the non-dual reality is Being-Will. It can change into multiplicity in a real sense without losing its integrity as a Whole. That change mutates the causal substance is a law that governs the entities of the limited world. It cannot hold good with the Infinite and the Absolute Being, unless we make its absoluteness a meaningless expression and reduce its entity into that of a stock or stone. So according to the Śākta version of Advaita, the Non-dual Entity as Will or Śakti, changes in a real sense into the world of multiplicity of Jīvas and Jagat, without however forfeiting its non-dual status as Being. This looks illogical, but in no way more so than when the Kevalādvaita posits an ignorance while at the same time describing the ultimate Being as non-dual. Besides, in the Śākta version of Advaita, creation being real, bondage, liberation and the scriptures which teach the way for liberation all become real. These basic metaphysical differences also imply ethical differences between them. For Śrī Śaṅkara, all actions have got only reference to the illusory level of Vyavahāra (empirical life). Though works done in the proper spirit of detachment may be an indirect cause for spiritual illumination, these have to be abandoned or renounced at a certain stage, as the aspirant should become absolutely workless in the state of Jñāna. No combination of Karma and Jñāna is allowed in his system. But in the Śākta doctrine, there is no such dichotomy between Jñāna and Karma. Upāsanā and Jñāna go hand in hand. The Śākta system is simply a system of rituals accompanied with meditations, but it is based on a non-dual interpretation of Reality.

Reconciliation

These are some of the basic differencess between the systems. There are many other subsidiary differences too,

but we shall not go into them here. It is because of this basic difference in the philosophic outlook of the two systems that many modern critics hesitate to accept the tradition of Srī Śaṅkarācārya's authorship of Saundarya-laharī, which to all appearances is a pure Śākta text. It is not Saundarya-laharī alone but there are equally long and important devotional texts like the Śivānandalaharī which are attributed to Śrī Śaṅkara. But in the case of such texts, this metaphysical incongruity is not present, as they are only purely devotional. In spite of these differences, there is one weighty fact in accepting Śaṅkara's authorship of this text. There are about 35 commentaries in Sanskrit by eminent scriptural exigetists on the Saundarya-laharī, and no one can explain this unless the text had originated from a universally accepted and venerated authority.

The tradition that this hymn of Śākta leanings could have been composed by Śrī Śaṅkara becomes credible when we find weighty authorities also of the past supporting his authorship of other obviously Śākta works like *Prapañca-sāra*. On this point Arthur Avalon writes as follows in his Introduction to Ānanda-laharī: "I may however take this opportunity of writing that since then a writer in one of the Indian journals has given the following list of well-known writers, who, he writes, support the traditional authorship, namely: Amalānanda Yatīndra (contemporary of Hemādri, the author of *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi*), in his *Vedānta-kalpataru* quotes from *Prapañcasāra* of Śaṅkara, whom he called Bhagavatpāda; Sāyaṇa, his brother Mādhava, Rāghava Bhatta commentator on the *Śaradā-Tilaka,* and Nīlakaṇṭha in his *tīkā* on the *Devī-Bhāgavata* are quoted to support the tradition; as also Nṛsimha in his *Durgāpradīpa* and *Tārā-bhakti-sudhārṇava,* Appayya Dīkṣita and the Bengali Pandits Raghunandana and Kṛṣṇa-candr'āgama-vāgīśa." The weighty authority

of all these ancient writers will have to be blindly set aside if the tradition regarding Śaṅkara's authorship of a Sakta poem like Saundarya-laharī is to be seriously doubted.

So in the absence of any other source of importance contradicting the traditional view, we shall be justified in accepting the tradition that Śri Saṅkara is its author. Besides, it has already been pointed out, that it is a common practice among Indian philosophers to be the champions of a philosophy as also the upholders of cults or systems of personalised worship of the Deity. Saktism is an important cult of India, and Saṅkara, who is called the Ṣaṇmata-sthapaka, the establisher of the six cults, can be an authority on Saktism too as he is on the other cults.

The Contents of the Hymn: Schools of Saktism

Regarding the contents of Saundaryalahari, its first 41 verses deal with the supremacy of Sakti personified as the Divine Mother, the way of adoring Her by internal worship consisting in awakening the sleeping Kuṇḍalinī and raising Her through the six plexuses to the centre in the mid-brain called Sahasrāra and also of Her adoration in Her external diagrammatic symbol called the Srī-Cakra and the repetition of the Mantra revealed in it (verses 32-33). Besides these, the Bījas or indeclinable syllables forming the 'seeds' or Bījas of many Mantras of the Śākta school are derived from these verses. The remaining 59 verses are devoted to the exposition of the supremely beautiful form of Tripura-sundarī, the Divine Mother, in highly poetical language for the contemplation of pious votaries.

As has already been pointed out, the Sakta philosophy depicts the Supreme Reality as non-dual but having within it a distinction between Śiva and Śakti or the Power Holder and

Power, described earlier as Being and Will. In the personalised conception, what is called Power here becomes the Divine Mother, Tripurasundarī, and the Power Holder Śiva, Her Consort. Thus though they are in principle one, in practice they are treated as distinct. In pure Śaivism represented by the different schools of its sects in this country, the Śiva aspect is the Principal and the Śakti represented as His Consort, is subsidiary and an accessory. In the Śākta conception however, Śaktī becomes the dominant factor and Śiva becomes practically a substratum, an entity taken for granted as a background for His own manifestation as Power or Śakti, represented as the Divine Mother. Whether they are both equal (*Sama*) or there is the relationship of Principal and Accessory between them is a question that divides Śākta schools into Samaya and Kaula systems of thought. On this question the view of the philosophy expressed in Saundarya-laharī seems to be divided, with however a leaning towards the latter in some verses at least. Take for example, the very first verse which says, "United with Śakti, Śiva is endowed with power to create; otherwise, He is incapable even of movement." Next take the verse 24 which says, "Brahmā brings forth the universe, Hari sustains and protects it, Rudra destroys it and Maheśvara absorbs everything into Himself and disappears into Sadāśiva. Then when it is time for the new cycle of creation to begin, Sadāśiva, on receiving the *mandate from Thee by a movement of Thy creeper-like brows,* manifests and restores them all into activity as in the previous cycle." The dominant position of Śakti is also asserted in the Ardhanārīśvara (Androgyne) conception in verse 23, "I have a feeling that, unsatisfied even after having appropriated the left half of Śambhu, Thou hast also invaded His right half; for, Thy form that shines in my heart is totally crimson in complexion

and slightly bent by the weight of the two breasts, besides having three eyes and crescent moon in the diadem."

Besides these, there are the following two verses, 34 and 35, in the first of which, the relative dominance of Śakti and in the second, Her absolute dominance are stated. The verse 34 which refers to the sect called the Pūrva Kaulas, asserting the relative importance of both, runs: "O Bhagavatī! Thou art verily the form of Śambhu, with the sun and the moon as two breasts. Thy body is verily the flawless body of Śambhu having nine aspects (Navātman). Therefore, in the matter of relationship of Śesa (the accessory) and Śesī (the essential), both of ye – Ānanda-bhairava (Parātman) and Ānanda-bhairavī (Parā)-stand on equal footing." (See notes on the verse for full implication.) Going still further and asserting the complete dominance of Śakti in the creative cycle, verse 35, which is said to support the view of Uttara Kaulas, runs: "Thou art the mind, Thou art the Ākāśa, Thou art air as also fire, Thou art water and the earth too. When Thou hast transformed Thyself in this way into the form of the universe, there is nothing beyond not included in Thee. It is to transform Thyself, who art Consciousness-Bliss, into the universe that Thou assumest the form of Śiva's Consort."

All these important verses of the Text imply the supremacy of Śakti, which is the reason for designating this school as Śākta in contrast to the schools of Śaivism, where Śiva is dominant in creation and dissolution and Śakti is only accessory. In Indian iconography this is indicated by the smaller size given to the Śakti by the side of Śiva. The dominance of Śakti in the Śākta sect is shown most conspicuously in the Uttara-kaula image of Kālī, where Śakti, shown as the very picture of power and energy, stands on the chest of the inert form of Śiva. In contrast with the Kaula

conception of Kālī, which represents the aspects of Mahā-Kālī or Śakti as the destroyer and consumer of the cosmos, the Saundaryalaharī is exalting the same Śakti in Her creative role as Mahā-Tripura-sundarī, the supremely Divine Beauty of the three Puras or Bindus. But even here in picturing the Devī thus, is it not the dominance of Śakti that is conveyed in a verse like the eighth of the text, besides what we have already quoted? The verse number eight runs as follows: "Fortunate indeed are the few, who adore Thee, the Inundation of Bliss-Consciousness, as abiding on a mattress that is Paramaśiva (Supreme Śiva) spread on a couch, which too is an aspect of Śiva, placed in a chamber of wish-yielding gems amidst a Nīpa pleasure-garden in Maṇidvīpa (Isle of Gems) situated in the Nectar-ocean which is fringed by rows of the celestial Kalpaka trees." Here an expression like 'abiding on a mattress that is Parama-śiva or Sadāśiva' seems to indicate the dominance of Śakti. The same seems to be the implication of the expression "a couch which too is an aspect of Śiva." It is maintained by commentators that the couch on which the Devī is resting has Brahmā, Hari, Rudra and Iśvara as its four feet. These four together with Sadāśiva, who forms Her seat, are called Pañca-preta, the Five Dead.

There are however passages which are clearly indicative also of the equality of Śiva and Śakti. Reference can be made to the six verses beginning with the 36th on meditation in the six Cakras or places along the Susumnā or Kaula path. In these meditations Śiva and Śakti have an equal place. The Śiva-Śakti conceptions to be meditated upon are—Para-śambhunātha and Cit-parāmbā in Ājña-cakra, as Hemeśvara and Hemeśvari in Anāhata-cakra, as Vyomeśvara and Vyomeśvari in Viśuddhi Cakra, as Samvarteśvara and Samayāmbā in Svādhiṣṭhāna-cakra, Megheśvara and Saudāminī in Maṇipūra-cakra and as Ādinātha and Lāsyeśvarī

in Mūlādhāra-cakra. These topics of meditation are elaborately discussed in the notes on the verses concerned. Besides, Śrī-Cakra which forms the symbol of Śiva-Śakti according to the Saundarya-laharī and is elaborately discussed in many verses, implies the co-presence and therefore the equality of Śiva and Śakti in all conditions. The Samatva or equality of Śiva and Śakti in both creation and dissolution is set forth by commentators as five-fold: Adhiṣṭhāna-sāmya (identity of basis), Avasthāna-sāmya (identity of condition), Anuṣṭhāna-sāmya (identity of occupation or purpose), Rūpa-sāmya (identity of form) and Nāma-sāmya (identity of names). Śiva and Śakti are in this context named as Samaya and Samayā, respectively. The form of worship described as Samayācāra accepts this position of equality and importance between Śiva and Śakti in both creation and dissolution.

From the analysis of verses of the Saundaryalaharī given above, it will be noted that the text of this great hymn supports both these doctrines, the Kaula and the Samaya, with a tilt towards the latter. But the followers of the Samaya path contend, as does Laksmīdhara, a noted commentator whom we have followed in our translation and notes, that the Kaula Mārga is banned by Saundaryalaharī on the basis of the verse 31 which runs "Paśupati (Śiva) deceived or deluded (*atisandhāya*) the world by giving out the sixty four other Tantras which expound practices conferring only one or another of the various psychic powers and worldly fulfilments. So on Thy special insistence He revealed this, Thy own Tantra, to the world independent of all the others and capable of conferring all the Puruṣārthas—Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa, by itself on the votaries." Lakshmīdhara contends that these sixty-four Tantras are 'Vedabāhya', that is, excluded from the sanction of the Vedas, because they inculcate cruel and unclean practices of the Kāpalikas, Digambaras, Ksapa-

ṇakas and other degenerate sects. But a weighty authority like Bhāskararāya, also a noted interpreter of the Śakti cult, differs from Lakṣmīdhara's views of wholesale condemnation of these Tantras. He maintains that they have received the recognition of Vāmakeśvara Tantra and Kalpa Sūtras as Śāstras. So Lakṣmīdhara's views, according to him, are either coloured by prejudice, or are the result of an imperfect understanding of the true import and utility of these Tantras. This view is also reflected in Arthur Avalon's translation of the above verse 31. Substituting *abhisandhāya* for *atisandhāya* (the text according to Kāmeśvara-sūri), he translates the first line of the verse as: "Paśupati, having known all things in the universe by means of the sixty-four Tantras, was proficient in the Siddhis with which each of these Tantras deal."

This brings us to the subject of these two sects of the worshippers of Śakti—the Samayins and the Kaulas. It is maintained by Lakṣmīdhara that Samayācara is a pure form of worship, where worship is done inwardly in Dahar' ākāśa (the Sky of the Heart) as contrasted with Mahākāsa i.e. the external space in which all of us find ourselves. Worship for the true Samayins consists in raising the already awakened Kuṇḍalinī from the Maṇipūra (the third of the Cakras) to the Sahasrāra or the Thousand-petalled lotus through the intervening three Cakras known as Anāhata at the level of the heart, Viśuddha at the level of the throat and Ājñā at the level of the brows, and finally uniting the Kuṇḍalinī with Śiva in the Sahasrāra or the Thousand-petalled Lotus at the level of the brain. The aspirant thus gets perfect Samādhi.

It is doubtful if this exposition of Lakṣhmīdhara is fully supported by the text of the Saundaryalaharī. In verse 9 of the text it is clearly stated that the meditation of the

Kuṇḍalinī begins from Mūlādhāra at the base of the spine, and the power, passing through Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddhi, and Ājñā, and thus covering the whole of the Kula path, is united with Śiva in the Sahasrāra. The lower Cakras of Mūlādhāra and Svādhiṣṭhāna are regions of darkness and Kuṇḍalinī is in a sleeping state there. But Lakṣmīdhara is of opinion that as in the case of followers of the Samayācāra, the Power is already awakened by the Mahāvedha done by the Guru, his meditation begins from Maṇipūra. There is no authority for this in the Saundaryalaharī. On the other hand, besides the 9th verse already referred to, verses 36 to 41 deal with meditation as beginning from Mūlādhāra upto the Ājñācakra and the Sahasrāra. According to Lakṣhmīdhara's own statement the six verses deal with the meditation of those who follow the Samayācāra. However, in his edition of the Saundaryalaharī as also of those who follow his views, these verses are arranged in the reverse order —in other words as beginning with Ājñā Cakra and ending with Mūlādhāra. This looks like a highly artificial arrangement, as meditations never begins from the highest level and comes gradually to the lowest. So Arthur Avalon has with great justification changed the order of the verses into the natural one and meditation is made to proceed from the lower level to the higher. Lakṣmīdhara's arrangement of the text must only be for safeguarding his position that Samayācārins begin their meditation from Svādhiṣṭhāna only, as the Kuṇḍalinī is already awakened in them. The justification for the arrangement given by Lakṣmīdhara is given in the comments on the relevant verses.

Sri-Cakra *

But among those who call themselves Samayācārins, there is hardly anyone who does this kind of exclusive internal

* See p.p.48 and 49 and also Appendix-I

worship in which all the rituals are performed in the Cidākāśa or Dahara (the sky or dimension of the Spirit). What they do is to practise meditation in an amateurish way, and do all worship on Śrī-Cakra, which is a diagrammatic representation of Śiva-Śakti in the Cosmic and individual aspects. In the Hindu devotional practice, there are three kinds of external symbols used for worship of the Supreme Being who is in Himself formless and nameless. The most external is the image cast in various human forms but with paraphernalia signifying supra-human divinity. The last and the most subtle is the Mantras, which are Divine names preceded by Bijākṣaras or letters indicating certain indeclinable seed sounds. A Mantra is Divine Power clothed in sound. Between these two come Yantras, also called Cakras which are representations of the Deity in geometrical diagrams. The Mantra, which is considered the very deity as sound, is for continued repetition followed by meditation while the Yantra is for external worship. Among the Śāktas or followers of the Śakti worship, the Śrī-Yantra, or Śrī-Cakra as it is usually called, is considered the holiest and the most significant of these, and the worship of the Deity is done in that.

The Śrī-Cakra is conceived as Śiva-Śakti in the macrocosmic as also in the microscsmic aspects i.e. as the Cosmos and as the individual. The diagram consists of a series of nine triangles superimposed around a small central circle known as Bindu, forming forty-three Konas or triangular projections. In the centre is the Bindu, representing Śiva-Śakti in union in the causal state from which all the other parts of the diagram representing the cosmos are evolved. The Bindu is in a central triangle with apex downwards in the Samhāra-cakra of the Kaulas, but in the Sṛṣṭi-cakra of the Samayins it is below the base of the central triangle with its apex upwards. Enclosing it and superimposed on one

another are the four Śiva triangles (*Śrikaṇṭhas*) with apex upwards and five Śakti triangle (*Śivayuvatis*) inclusive of the central one, with apex downwards. These are surrounded by two circles of lotuses, one with eight petals (*Vasudalam*) and the other with sixteen petals (*Kalāśram*). Outside these, are three circles (*mekhalātraya*) around and a rectangular enclosure (*Bhūpura*) of three lines for the whole figure, with four entrances on the four sides.

The small central circle known as Bindu stands for Śiva-Śakti in the causal stage of creation. Śakti is here represented as Mahātripurasundarī, the great Mother or the Divine Beauty of the three Puras or Bindus. The Bindu represents the initial pulsing forth of massive or *ghanībhūta-śakti*, with the potentiality of the universe within itself. It is spoken of as three to indicate the three stresses when the unified non-dual Śiva-Śakti becomes separated into the two aspects—Prakāśa (the Aham or I-Consciousness) and Vimarśa (the idam or this-consciousness). These three stresses are technically called Nāda, Kalā and Bindu. Nāda is the inchoate sound movement (interpreted by the human ear as Omkāra), and Kalā is the Kāma-Kalā, the desire to create, which the Vedas represent as 'May I be many.' Bindu is the potential universe ready to separate into various categories. All these three stresses (Mudras or poses) of Śiva-Śakti together is represented by the central red circle with an imaginary line across it to represent the polarity in that supreme category as Śiva-Śakti. This Bindu, the threefold stress of the externalising or creative Śakti, is the Mahātripurasundarī. She is described in verse seven of the text as *Pura-mathitur āhopuruṣikā*. Popularly interpreted as the 'Pride of Śiva,' it really means that Śiva as Prakāśa (Luminosity of Consciousness) realises Himself as 'I am,' through Her, the Vimarśa Sakti (the Object as the Reflector). Further in Verse 8 She is described

for meditation in the heart thus: "Fortunate indeed are the few who adore Thee, the Inundation of Bliss-Consciousness, as abiding on a mattress that is Parama-śiva (the Supreme Śiva or Sadā-śiva) spread on a couch which is also an aspect of Śiva placed in a chamber of wish-yielding gems (*cintāmaṇi*), amidst a Nīpa pleasure garden in Maṇidvīpa (Isle of Gems) which is in the Nectar-Ocean fringed by rows of the celestial Kalpaka trees."

The rest of the Śrī-Cakra represents the whole of the Cosmos (Brahmāṇḍa) as evolved from the Bindu, standing for Tripura-sundarī or creative cosmic power. Surrounding the Bindu are a series of overlapping triangles. Four of them called Śrikaṇṭhas or the Śiva triangles, having their apex upwards, and the other five are superimposed upon the former with apex dowards. They are the five *Śiva-yuvatis* or Śakti-triangles. These nine constitute the nine basic categories of the universe, evolving from the Supreme Mother Tripura-sundarī represented by the central Bindu or small circle. Hence they are called the nine *Mūla-prakṛtis* or Root substances of the universe. The Śiva-triangles (*Srikaṇṭhas*) and the Śakti-triangles (*Śiva-yuvatis*) are superimposed in order to indicate that Śiva and Śakti are involved in the whole process of Becoming in its microcosmic and cosmic aspects. In the individual they are present as the nine Dhātus or substances constituting the body of the individual. These are *Tvak* (skin), *Asṛk* (Blood), *Māmsa* (flesh), *Medhas* (fat) and *Asthi* (bone). These five categories are born of Śakti element, while the evolutes of the Śiva elements consist of *Śukla* (Semen), *Majjā* (Marrow), *Prāṇa* (the vital Energy) and *Jīva* (the Individual Soul). On the Cosmic side, the five evolutes of Śakti are the five *Bhūtas* (Elements), the five *Tanmātras* (subtle Elements), the five *Karmendriyas* (Organs of Action), the five *Jñānendriyas* (Organs of Knowledge) and

Manas (Mind) have their origin in Śakti element, while *Māyā, Śuddha-vidyā, Maheśvara* and *Sadāśiva* form the Śiva element. Thus the nine basic triangles symbolise the twenty five elements (*Tattvas*) that constitute the cosmos and individual bodies according to the Śākta cosmology.

By the intersection of the lines of these nine triangles are formed forty three Konas or triangles, in which is included the central triangle having the Bindu in the middle. In all these Konas are placed the different letters of the alphabet, which stand for the Devatās, who are emanations of Tripura-sundarī as the conscious forces governing the various powers of Nature in the Cosmos and the individuals. These Devatās (gods and goddesses) are not to be equated with the animistic spirits of the primitive man. For in the Śākta world view Spirit is supreme and all Nature consists of evolutes of that Spirit, of which what we call inert matter is only the latest evolute having consciousness only withdrawn by the inherent power of concealment (*tirodhāna*). The Spirit, the Being-Power, is one only, and what are called gods and goddesses placed in the various parts of the Śrī-Cakra are only Its manifestations for governing the various forces of Nature.

The portions of the Śrī-Cakra lying outside the forty-four centres comprising the Bindu also are all supposed to be included in the latter—the eight petalled lotus (*Aṣṭadala-padma*) in the central triangle (*trikoṇa*), the sixteen petalled lotus (*Sodaśa dala-padma*) in the eight angled Cakra (*Aṣta-kona*), the three circles (*mekhalā-traya*) in the two ten-angled Cakras (*Daśāra-dvaya*), and the surrounding space with the rectangular lines and four entrances (*Bhūpura*) in the fourteen-angled Cakra (*caturdaśāra*).

Śrī-Cakra, the Sahasrāra and the Sad-Cakras

The thinkers of the philosophy of Śrī-Cakra also find a

correspondence between the different parts of it and the six plexuses along the spinal column and the thousand petalled plexus of the Sahasrāra in the brain, as propounded in the Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. When we speak of the brain and spinal column in this description, it should be clearly understood that these are only the roughly corresponding physical regions forming the counterpart of the subtle body wherein the Cakras have their location. In the comments on verse 9, we have dwelt on the subject of the Sahasrāra and the six plexuses along the spinal column. To give a brief restatement of it: corresponding to the spinal column and the central nervous system is the system of psychic nerve currents having their origin at the back of the brain. The Yogis call that region the thousand petalled lotus or Sahasrāra, with which Śrī-Cakra is identified through super-imposition. It is the ultimate source of powers known as *Icchā, Jñāna* and *Kriyā* or will, knowledge and action. It is these powers that manifest through the various organs of knowledge and action. All these organs are regulated by a central control in the brain, and that is identified with the *Baindava-sthāna*, the central circle of the Śrī-Cakra. It is the seat of Śiva, Pure Being, and is the *Jyotirmaṇḍala*, the Sphere of Light, because the eternal spiritual moon illumines it with its blissful light.

This Sahasrāra is also the source of the three nerve currents of psychic significance. In Yogic language these nerve currents are called *Iḍā* on the left, *Suṣumna* in the centre, and *Piṅgala* on the right. Through the *Suṣumnā* runs a narrow hollow canal (the Kula path), which is closed at the end, above the level of the anus at the base of the spinal column. Whether these Yogic nerves are to be identified with what are known to the anatomist as the afferent and efferent nerves and the Central Canalis is a moot question.* It is better to conceive them as psychic factors relating to the

* See Appendix II

subtle body and having some correspondence with their physical counterparts.

At the bottom of the Suṣumna against the level of the anus, is the basic plexus known as *Mūlādhāra,* described as a Trikoṇa (triangular-shaped), and pictured as a lotus of four drooping petals. Mūlādhāra is called the cave of Kuṇḍalinī, because Kuṇḍalinī, the Serpent Power, remains sleeping i.e. inactive there, after having completed its evolutionary purpose with the production of the Earth Element, the last of the twenty-five categories, which forms the constituent of the Mūlādhāra. Just as Tripurasundarī the Divine Mother is the Śakti, pictured as the Consort of Śiva, the Supreme Being, the Kuṇḍalinī is the segment of that Cosmic Power as the Śakti of the Jīva, who is none other than an Aṁśa (particle) of the Supreme Śiva embodied as the individual (microcosm). It is this Śakti that evolves in the individual the counterparts of all the twenty-five Cosmic Categories. The first four pure categories—Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Śuddhavidyā and Māyā—are considered pure and therefore included within the thousand petalled lotus itself and the remaining twenty-one categories are included in the six plexuses or Cakras described as lotuses descending along the Suṣumna upto, and inclusive of, the Mūlādhāra. Of these the topmost located between the eye brows is Ājñā-cakra, a lotus of two petals constituted of the Element Mind (Manas) which includes the five organs of knowledge and the five organs of action. Below that at the level of the throat is the Viśuddhi-cakra of sixteen petals constituted of the Element Ākāśa. Next at the level of the heart is the Anāhata-cakra, a lotus of twelve petals, having the Element Air as its constituent. Below that, at the level of the navel is the Maṇipūra, a lotus of ten petals, of which the Element Water is the constituent. Still below at the level of the genitals is the Svādhiṣṭhāna-

cakra in the shape of a six petalled lotus with Fire as the constituent element. Still below at the bottom of the Suṣumna is the basic plexus, the Mūlādhāra, which has already been described as a four-petalled lotus. It is constituted of the Earth-element, the last and the twenty-fifth category, into which Śakti evolves. Just as the Cosmic Śakti, Tripura-sundarī, evolves these twenty-five categories which go to combine into the manifest universe, the individual aspect of that Śakti evolves into these Centres representing the different categories and the body-mind, and having completed the evolutionary process sleeps or remains contracted, or coiled up in the final category Earth represented by the Mūlādhāra, which is also called the Trikoṇa (the Triangle). The Yoga propounded in the Saundaryalaharī is one of rousing the sleeping Kuṇḍalinī through the Japa of the Mantra given in the Text in code language and concentrated meditation, and leading the Power through the Suṣumna up to the Sahasrāra in the brain and uniting it with Śiva there. This results in perfect Samādhi. In the course of its ascent the power touches and penetrates the six lotuses or plexuses in the hollow path of the Suṣumna, known also as the Kula Path.

This ascent of the Kuṇḍalinī is also helped by the scientific practice of Prāṇāyāma. In the unenlightened person in whom the Kuṇḍalinī is asleep, the Jñāna-śakti (cognitional power) and Kriyā-śakti (volitional power) function through the Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nerves that flank the Suṣumna. By the power of concentration generated by the Japa and the Prāṇayāma, the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened and it forces its way up the Kula Path, opening up the closed bottom of the Suṣumna. Along with its upward course it gathers up also all the life energies that are functioning at the lower levels of the body, leaving those portions cold. For, all these energies are only

what are dispersed from the Kuṇḍalinī and therefore they are gathered up with the upward course of that Power.

As the Power touches one plexus after another, consciousness is raised to subtler levels, described in Texts as the seven higher spheres. The nature of these meditations and of the Realms communed with, are described in verses 36 to 41. The Kula Path and the Cakras situated in them are divided into three segments—Brahma-granthi up to the Svādhiṣṭhāna which is considered the region of Agni (Fire) and of darkness, Viṣṇu-granthi up to Anāhata which is the region of sun and of alternating light and darkness, and Rudra-granthi up to Ājña the region of the pure light of moon (*jyotirmaṇḍala*). The Sahasrāra at the topmost end of the Kula Path in the brain is the region of the eternally blissful Spiritual Moon, which is different from the moonlight at Ājña-Cakra. Now all these six Cakras are involved in the Sahasrāra and are only the gross expressions of what is involved in the Sahasrāra. In the case of the aspirants who get absorption in Śiva-Śakti in the thousand petalled lotus in the brain, all these Cakras too are absorbed in the Sahasrāra, so long as the Samādhi lasts. As the six Cakras are gross manifestations of the Sahasrāra, it is natural for them to get absorbed in their matrix along with the rise of the Kuṇḍalinī, and manifest again when the Kuṇḍalinī descends.

All this Yogic psychology becomes important in the study of the Śrī-Cakra, because Śrī-Cakra is supposed to represent Śiva-Śakti in its evolution as the Cosmos, as also as the Sahasrāra inclusive of the six Cakras in the individual. Thus the Śrī-Cakra is made into a comprehensive symbol for worship and practising identification with Śakti even by those who follow the Samayācāra through the external worship of the Śrī-Cakra in the Mahākāśa (external sky), as contrasted with the true and fully competent worshippers

of this class, who do worship internally, without any external symbols or ritual, through meditation in the Daharākāśa (the sky of the heart). About the Śrī-Cakra there is the saying: '*Śiva-Śaktyātmakam jñeyam Śrī-Cakram Śivayor vapuḥ*—Śrī-Cakra is ensouled by Śiva and Śakti. It is their body.' Śrī-Cakra is that into which for the blessing of devotees, Śiva-Śakti have converted themselves and taken their abode. They are present there and devotees can commune with them through it. But for the true and competent follower of Samayācāra this communion is purely internal. In the Maṇipūra they worship the Devī Kuṇḍalinī who has already been awakened by the Mahāvedha done by the Guru. They then raise Her to the Anāhata-cakra at the level of the heart where She is again adored in the Daharākāśa (Sky of the Heart) and then raised to the Ājñā-cakra, from where she quickly unites with Śiva in the Sahasrāra.

Reference has already been made to the two differing schools of Śāktas, the Samayācarins and the Kaulas, the main theoretical difference between them being that the former consider Śiva and Śakti to be equal (Sama) in importance, while the latter exalt Śakti almost to the exclusion of Śiva (cf. verses quoted earlier). It has also been pointed out that Saundaryalaharī has reference to both these Śākta theories. As the Saundaryalaharī deals mainly with the true Samaya worship i.e. the internal worship of Śakti in the Daharākāśa as contrasted with what is done by most of the followers who worship the Śakti mainly in the Śrī-Cakra in the Mahākāśa, we have followed mainly Lakṣmīdhara's interpretation of the Text. He is a strong opponent of the Kaula doctrine either because of his prejudice or ignorance, as an authoritative Śākta thinker of old like Bhāskara Rāya and a recent champion of the system like Arthur Avalon, have pointed out.

According to Lakṣmīdhara the word Kaula means one who worships Śakti in the Kula i.e. the Suṣumna at the lowest level, the Mūlādhāra, where the Kuṇḍalinī is asleep. Awakening the Kuṇḍalinī with external rituals, following the procedures peculiar to them, constitutes Mukti for the Kaulas. Lakṣmīdhara contends that they have no idea of raising the Kuṇḍalinī to the Sahasrāra. This particular view is specially challenged by Arthur Avalon as being unsupported by any authority other than Lakṣmīdhara himself. Lakṣmīdhara however contends that this view is supported by Subhagodaya, (cf. Verse 42 etc.), a text attributed to Gauḍapāda.

According to the teaching of this school, the meaning of the word Kula and the purpose of its disciplines are quite different. Bhāskara Rāya, an authority on the Tantras, describes the meaning of Kula as follows:

Kulam Śaktir iti proktam akulam Śiva ucyate
Kulā'kula - sambandhaḥ kaulam ity abhidhīyate

—"Kula is Śakti; Akula is Śiva. The establishment of the harmonious relation of Akula (Śiva) with Kula (Śakti) is Kaula."

Again *Kulārṇava Tantra* (6.20) defines the terms as:

Akulam Śiva ity uktam kulam Śaktiḥ prakīrtitā
Kulā-kul'ānusandhāne nipuṇāḥ Kaulikāḥ priye

"Kula is Śakti; Akula is Śiva. Those who are proficient in meditation on both Kula and Akula are Kaulikas."

It is clear from this that Kaulas do not, as Lakṣmīdhara says, consider themselves as worshipping the sleeping Kuṇḍalinī in the Mūlādhāra only, but as worshippers of Śakti seeking to unite Śakti as Kuṇḍalinī with Śiva in the Sahasrāra through rituals, Japa and meditation. The aim of the Kaula too is Mokṣa as it is of the Samayins, though there may be differences in the Sādhanas and philosophies they follow.

According to Lakṣmīdhara the Uttara-Kaulas totally relegate Śiva and concern themselves with Śakti, whereas Samayins give equal place for both and find their unity in the fourfold Sāmyatā (equality) between them both. In Sir John Woodroffe's writings dealing with the Śākta philosophy and practices, as also in Tantra literature of Kaula leanings, both Śiva and Śakti have a place. But the Kaula being Advaitin in a more pronounced sense, Śiva and Śakti are not for him two but an identity, and when he speaks of the one, the other becomes an implication only. Besides, in any Śākta cult that is true to its name, Śakti has to get more importance. If it is otherwise, it will be just like Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in which the Śakti (identified as the female counterpart) is only an accessory of the Deity, or as in the Sāmkhya's Puruṣa-Prakṛti conception, two parallel and ultimate reals in a metaphysical sense. So the Kaula position of dominance of Śakti in their cult has much relevancy.

Another contrast that is drawn between the Samaya and the Kaula is that the former is pure internal worship while the latter is pure external worship—a topic which we have already dealt with partially. This is an over-statement. Neither are all Samayins pure internal worshippers, nor are all Kaulas pure external worshippers. As has already been pointed out, except the highest type of aspirants whose consciousness has become subtle and one-pointed enough to rise to the Daharākāśa (the spiritual sky of the heart) from Mahākāśa (ordinary space), all others who call themselves Samayins, do their worship on the Śrī-Cakra externally designed, using various *Upacāras* (services with rituals and ingredients) common in all external worship. As for the Kaulas, worshippers are divided into three grades—the Paśu, Vīra and Divya. In the case of the first two grades of worship, which are preparatory stages, the Kaulas too worship external symbols

with *Upacāras,* though these are different from those of the Samayins. The highest class of Kaulas, the Divya or the Divine, have only internal worship of Śakti through meditative process. Thus both the schools at the highest level are one in being internal worshippers. At the initial stage both are external worshippers, though the rites and procedures are entirely different. The Vīra form of adoration, which is applicable to the second class of Kaula, is controversial and has no place in the Samaya system.

It has to be noted that the Kaula is always criticised and downgraded by Lakṣmīdhara as one concerned with the worship of the sleeping Kuṇḍalinī in the Mūlādhāra. But he contradicts himself when he describes the Samayin also as concerned with the sleeping Kuṇḍalinī in the early stages until it is aroused by devotional rites, Japa and the Guru's grace. About this he states in his commentary on verse 41 of Saundaryalaharī as follows: "The aspiring and devoted disciple in the disciplinary stage receives the great Vidyā, along with instruction on Ṛṣi, Chandas, Devatā etc. from the Guru, and then strictly following the Guru's instructions, performs *śuṣka* (routine) Japa of the Mantra. Afterwards on the eighth day (*Aṣṭami*) of the bright fortnight called the ninth day (*Navami*) of the *aśvayuja month*, he approaches the Guru in the night and prostrates before him holding his feet. Pleased with the disciple surrendering at his feet thus, the Guru by way of blessing him, places his hands on his head. By the power of this blessing and by the imparting of the Mantra and of the way of worship in the six Cakras, and by the instruction for effecting the fourfold (or sixfold) identities—all together bring about in the disciple the *Śiva-mahāvedha-siddhi.* As a consequence of this the Bhagavatī all of a sudden reveals Herself in the Maṇipūra-cakra. She is then worshipped mentally and led to the higher Cakras of

Anāhata, Viśuddha and Ājña, from the last of which She very soon ascends to the Thousand-petalled lotus to unite with Śiva." But at the end of his elaborate commentary on this verse he adds: "*Mūlādhārasthitām eva Devīm suptām prabodhayet*—Awaken the Devi sleeping in the Mūlādhāra." In the light of this both the Samayins and Kaulas can do the adoration of the Devi step by step from Mūlādhāra upwards. "This is a secret I learnt from my Parama-guru."

Lakṣmīdhara's views given in the comments on the Saundaryalaharī can be taken as valid only as far as the Samaya system is concerned. His criticism of the other schools is prejudiced and highly coloured, though it may be justified to a great extent by the abuses that have crept into the Vīra-sādhakas among the Kaulas. But the fact that in this sect also there have been very great Sādhakas, including illumined ones, should make one pause and think over the other side of the question, and seek to know what the Kaulas have to say about themselves. As the Śākta Tantras are works dealing with the practical side of Sādhana—i.e. with the rituals and practical side of the discipline—there have not been much of writings dealing with the theory of it or the philosophical principles behind it. In modern times this has been very comprehenseively accomplished by the writings of Sir John Woodroffe, known also by the pen name of Arthur Avalon, who was a Judge of the Calcutta High court, and who took advantage of his official life in India to make an in-depth study of the Tantric Texts and perhaps practise their discipline under experts. and publish the results of his research in a series of learned writings on Śaktism and editions and translations of Tantric texts. The readers interested in the study of the Kaula system may refer to his book '*Śakti and Śākta*.'

SAUNDARYA-LAHARĪ

1

The Supreme Reality is described here as Śiva-Śakti, the Inseparable Whole, the Being-Will:

शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुं
न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितु-मपि ।
अतस्त्वा-माराध्यां हरि-हर-विरिञ्चादिभि-रपि
प्रणन्तुं स्तोतुं वा कथ-मकृतपुण्यः प्रभवति ॥

Śivaḥ śaktyā yukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum
na ced evam devo na khalu kuśalaḥ spanditum api;
atas tvām ārādhyām Hari-Hara-Viriñcādibhir api
praṇantum stotum vā katham akṛta-puṇyaḥ prabhavati.

1 United with Śakti, Śiva is endowed with the power to create the universe. Otherwise, He is incapable even of movement. Therefore, who except those endowed with great merits acquired in the past can be fortunate enough to salute or praise Thee, Mother Divine, who art the adored of even Hari, Hara and Viriñci?

Notes: Śiva and Śakti are the Absolute Being and the Absolute Will (Power) inherent in the former. Will as Śakti means the three — Icchā (will), Jñāna (knowledge) and Kriyā (action). Though in abstract thought Śiva and Śakti can be referred to separately, they are one—the insepa-

rable Being-Will. 'Being' is a fiction if it is without Will, and Will a fancy if it is without Being. In their 'togetherness' the mighty universe of Becoming comes into existence. For purposes of worship, Being and Will are personified as Śiva and Śakti, the Father and the Mother of the worlds. The word Śiva comes from the root '*Vaśati*', to shine. Therefore, the word means 'He who is the self-conscious light of intelligence' or 'He who illumines, i.e., reveals the universe.' It can also be derived from the root '*śīṅ*', 'to sleep or dream', and interpreted as 'He who negates the sleep of ignorance.' Śakti means the Power of manifesting the universe. Śiva the Power-holder and Śakti the Power, though one, are yet conceived as distinct, and in the creative process, Śakti is conceived as manifesting the universe without in any way losing Her inherent unity with Śiva. In Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and such other cults also there is Power represented as a female counter-part. But in these cults Śakti is always an accessory of the Deity. But in the Śākta cult, Śakti is not a mere accessory of Śiva, but is of equal importance in the Samaya school of Śāktism, and the dominant element in the Kaula school as far as the creative cycle is concerned. This equality or dominance of Śakti is the characteristic feature of Śaktism. The idea is elaborated in the Introduction and in the comments on some of the succeeding verses.

As this is a hymn of the Śakti cult, the stress in this hymn is on the Mother aspect. It is to be noted here that it is a prevailing practice in the literature of different cults of India to exalt the Deity of each as the Supreme Being, and describe all other Deities as subordinate to Him or Her. So this being a hymn of the Śakti cult, it is stated that on the grace of this Universal Mother or Śakti depends the power of the four-faced Brahma to create, Viṣṇu to protect and Maheśvara to destroy, and so they all adore Her. Such being the case,

the poet-devotee surmises that only the most meritorious among mortals will feel the inclination to worship and pray to Her.

Commentators have traced to this verse many of the Mantras used for the worship of the Devi. Some opine that the Ṣodaśākṣarī-Mantra is implied herein, as the first half of the verse contains only sixteen words. It is also pointed out that this verse has got a reference to the Śrī-Cakra, the most sacred and recondite diagrammatic symbol of the Śakta cult representing Śiva-Śakti in cosmic evolution. The term Śiva stands for the half of Śrī-Cakra, which includes the four Śiva triangles, and the term Śakti stands for the other half of the Cakra having the five triangles of Śakti, both together constituting the Śrī-Cakra, which represents the Śiva-Śakti in evolution. There is the following well-known verse.

Caturbhiḥ Śiva-cakraiś ca Śakti-cakraiś ca pañcabhiḥ
Śiva-Śakty-ātmakam jñeyam Śrī-Cakram Śivayor vapuḥ

—"The four Śiva-cakras and the five Śakti-cakras form the Śrī-Cakra, which is of the nature of Śiva-Śakti and which constitutes the body of that Holy Pair, Śiva and Śakti.

2

The unimaginable greatness of the Divine Mother is glorified:

तनीयांसं पांसुं तव चरण-पङ्केरुह-भवं
विरिंचिः संचिन्वन् विरचयति लोका-नविकलम् ।
वहत्येनं शौरिः कथमपि सहस्रेण शिरसां
हरः संक्षुद्यैनं भजति भसितोद्धूलन-विधिम् ॥

Tanīyāmsaṃ pāmsum tava caraṇa-paṅkeruha-bhavam
Viriñciḥ samcinvan viracayati lokān avikalam;
vahaty enam Śauriḥ katham api sahasreṇa śirasām
Haraḥ samkṣudy'ainam bhajati bhasito'ddhūlana-vidhim.

2 Gathering a minute particle of dust from Thy lotus feet, Brahmā the creator brings into being this universe (limitless and mysterious) without any imperfection. The sustentator Viṣṇu as Ādiśeṣa somehow supports this universe (made out of that dust) with His thousand hoods. And Hara, the destroyer, crushing it into powder, rubs the ashes all over His body (at the time of dissolution).

Notes: The verse seeks to inspire the devotee's mind with the unimaginable glory of the Divine Mother. The mightiest object we can imagine is this mysterious universe, and that is only a particle of dust from Her feet. The mightiest beings we can imagine, namely, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, are required to do the various cosmic functions with it. In other hymns, the Deity as the Virāt, the Cosmic Whole, is described as the One having the universe as His body. But here the universe is described as a mere speck of dust of the Devī's feet. So great is Her transcendent glory, and it is only a reflection of that glory that is seen in the Cosmic powers of the Tṛmūrti (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva).

In one sense the whole universe which is described as having fourteen regions or dimensions, can be said to be directly borne by Mahāviṣṇu. Says the *Catuśśati:*

Śimśumārātmanā Viṣṇuḥ sapta-lokān adhaḥ-sthitān |
dadhre Śeṣatayā lokān bhūrādīn ūrdhvataḥ sthitān ||

—"As the power ensouling the Śimśumāra, Viṣṇu holds the seven worlds lower to it (*adhaḥsthitān*) while as Ādiśeṣa He supports on Himself the seven regions beginning with the earth."

3

The Mother is described as love.

अविद्यानामन्त-स्तिमिर - मिहिर-द्वीप-नगरी
जडानां चैतन्य-स्तबक-मकरन्द-स्रुतिझरी ।
दरिद्राणां चिन्तामणिगुणनिका जन्मजलधौ
निमग्नानां दंष्ट्रा मुररिपु-वराहस्य भवति ॥

Avidyānām antas-timira-mihira-dvīpa-nagarī
jaḍānām caitanya-stabaka-makaranda-sruti jharī;
daridrāṇām cintā-maṇi-guṇanikā janma-jaladhau
nimagnānām damṣṭrā mura-ripu-varāhasya bhavati.

3 The dust of Thy feet is the Island City, wherefrom takes place the luminous sun-rise of spiritual illumination driving away the over-casting darkness of ignorance in the hearts of devotees. It forms the cluster of flower buds, from which gushes forth the nectar of intelligence, enlivening the dull-witted. It is a veritable necklace of wish-yielding gems for the poverty-stricken. And for those immersed in the ocean of Samsara, it becomes their uplifter like the Tusk of Viṣṇu (which raised the earth from submergence in Pralaya waters when He incarnated as the Cosmic Boar).

Notes: In the previous verses the Mother was described as Power absolute. In this verse it is pointed out that She is also love working for the spiritual and material welfare of devotees. The 'tusk of Viṣṇu' is a reference to the Varāhāvatāra, when as the Cosmic Boar He lifted the earth on His tusk from the Pralaya waters after destroying the Asura Hiraṇyākṣa, who had hid the earth in Pralaya waters.

4

This verse repeats in poetic figures, the graciousness of the Mother:

त्वदन्यः पाणिभ्या-मभयवरदो दैवतगणः
त्वमेका नैवासि प्रकटित-वराभीत्यभिनया ।
भयात् त्रातुं दातुं फलमपि च वांछासमधिकं
शरण्ये लोकानां तव हि चरणावेव निपुणौ ।।

Tvad anyaḥ pāṇibhyām abhaya-varado daivatagaṇaḥ
tvam ekā n'aivāsi prakaṭita-var'ābhītyabhinayā,
bhayāt trātum dātum phalam api ca vāñchā samadhikam
śaraṇye lokanām tava hi caraṇāv eva nipuṇau.

4 All Deities other than Thee bestow boons and give shelter from fear by the pose of their hands. Thou alone art not given to any such external demonstration of giving boons and shelter. For, O Refuge of All, Thy very feet (without any demonstration) are themselves inherently capable of sheltering devotees from the great fear of Samsāra and of giving them much more than what they pray for!

Notes: The uniqueness of the Devi, distinguishing Her from other Deities, is shown by this figure of speech. Bestowal of freedom from fear and granting of even more than what a devotee prays for, are in Her very nature, and She has no need to show off such powers by the poses of her hands like other Deities by *Varadābhayamudrā.* For example in verse 7 where the Devi's form is described, there is no such pose of hand. But there are other conceptions of the Devi where we find such a pose.

5

The Divine Mother is described as the source of fascinating attraction.

हरिस्त्वामाराध्य प्रणत-जन-सौभाग्य-जननीं
पुरा नारी भूत्वा पुररिपुमपि क्षोभ-मनयत् ।
स्मरोऽपि त्वां नत्वा रतिनयन-लेह्येन वपुषा
मुनीनामप्यन्तः प्रभवति हि मोहाय महताम् ।।

Haris tvām ārādhya praṇata-jana-saubhāgya-jananīm
purā nārī bhūtvā Pura-ripum api kṣobham anayat;
smaro'pi tvāṁ natvā rati-nayana-lehyena vapuṣā
munīnām apy antaḥ prabhavati hi mohāya mahatām.

5 Adoring Thee, who art the bestower of prosperity on all Thy votaries, Hari (Viṣṇu) was able to become a charming female and stir waves of passion in the minds of no less a Deity than Hara, the Destroyer of the Three Cities. And Smara (Cupid, the god of love), through Thy adoration, got a form—a veritable feast for the eyes of his consort

Rati—, with which he has become capable of causing deep infatuation even in the minds of sages.

Notes: Perhaps reference is made in the first line to the incarnation of Viṣṇu as Mohinī or the charming damsel. According to some authorities, Viṣṇu is the Ṛṣi for one of the Vidyas (Vaiṣṇavī-Mantra) connected with the Devī. Hence he is Her devotee. By meditating on Her he obtained sameness of form with Her, and with that form, charmed the mind of Śiva. Kāma Deva, the god of love, also has gained the power over the minds of all only through Her grace.

6

It is now stated that it is the Mother's grace that lends power to Kāma Deva over all beings.

धनुः पौष्पं मौर्वी मधुकरमयी पञ्च विशिखाः
वसन्तः सामन्तो मलयमरु-दायोधन-रथः ।
तथाप्येकः सर्वं हिमगिरिसुते कामपि कृपां
अपांगात्ते लब्ध्वा जगदिद-मनङ्गो विजयते ॥

Dhanuḥ pauṣpam maurvī madhu-kara-mayī pañca viśikhāḥ
vasantaḥ sāmanto malaya-marud āyodhana-rathaḥ;
tathā'py ekaḥ sarvam Himagiri-sute kām api kṛpām
apāṅgāt te labdhvā jagad idam Anaṅgo vijayate.

6 (Look at Kāma Deva [Cupid] and his equipments—how ineffective they are in themselves!) His bow is made only of flowers; its bow-string is a line of honey-bees; he has only five arrows, and these are made of flowers; his minister is the (periodical and undependable) spring season;

his battle-chariot is the (shifting and formless) Malaya breeze; and above all he is Ananga, the bodiless one. Yet, O daughter of the Mountain! blessed by Thy gracious side-glance, he, by himself alone, is victorious over the whole world.

Notes: Though bodiless and equipped with insubstantial equipments, Kāma Deva, the god of love, is able to conquer all and have sway over the whole world because of the grace bestowed on him by the Devī.

7

Mother Tripurasundari's form is described and She is invoked:

क्वणत्कांची-दामा करिकलभ-कुंभ-स्तन-नता
परिक्षीणा मध्ये परिणत-शरच्चन्द्र-वदना ।
धनु-र्बाणान् पाशं सृणिमपि दधाना करतलैः
पुरस्ता-दास्तां नः पुरमथितु-राहो-पुरुषिका ॥

Kvaṇat-kāñcī-dāmā kari-kalabha-kumbha-stana-natā
parikṣīṇā madhye pariṇata-śarac-candra-vadanā;
dhanur bāṇān pāśam sṛṇim api dadhānā karatalaiḥ
purastād āstām naḥ Pura-mathitur āho-puruṣikā.

7 May the Divine Mother Tripurasundarī, the Pride (Ahanta or I-sense) of Śiva the Destroyer of the Three Cities., vouchsafe Her presence before us—the Mother with Her slender waist girdled with jingling mini-bells, with Her frame slightly bent in the middle by the weight of Her

breasts that bulge like the frontal globes of the forehead of a young elephant, with her face resembling the autumnal moon, and with her hand sporting a bow, arrows, a noose and a goad!

Notes: The Devī is called the *Āho-puruṣikā,* the Pride or I-sense of Śiva, because Śiva as Prakāśa (pure luminosity) becomes aware of Himself as 'I' when He is reflected in His Vimarśa-śakti (the objective counter-part). That Vimarśa-śakti, which makes Śiva conscious of Himself as 'I', is the Devi. The form described here is said to be what shines in the Maṇipūra-cakra of a Sādhaka of the Samaya path when he contemplates on his fourfold identity with the Devī. For explanation of the fourfold identity, see notes on Verse 41.

8

External worship of Śakti in the Śrī-Cakra is described here:

सुधासिन्धो-र्मध्ये सुरविटपि-वाटी-परिवृते
मणिद्वीपे नीपोपवनवति चिन्तामणि-गृहे ।
शिवाकारे मञ्चे परमशिव-पर्यङ्कनिलयां
भजन्ति त्वां धन्याः कतिचन चिदानन्द-लहरीम् ॥

Sudhā-sindhor madhye sura-viṭapi-vāṭī parivṛte
maṇi-dvīpe nīpo'pavana-vati cintāmaṇi-gṛhe;
śivākāre mañce Parama-śiva-paryaṅka-nilayām
bhajanti tvāṃ dhanyāḥ katicana cid-ānanda-laharīm.

8 Fortunate indeed are the few who adore Thee, the Inundation of Bliss-Consciousness, as abiding on a mattress, that is Paramaśiva (the Supreme Śiva or Sadāśiva)

spread on a couch, which too is an aspect of Śiva, placed in a chamber of wish-yielding gems (Cintāmaṇi), amidst a Nipa pleasure garden, in Maṇidvīpa (Isle of Gems), which is situated in the Nectar-Ocean and fringed by rows of celestial Kalpaka trees.

Notes: This and the verse following are highly esoteric. They deal with the Kaula and Samaya (external and internal) worship of Śakti. The worship done through the mystic diagram called Śrī-Cakra is described in anthropomorphic terms in this verse, and the various conceptions mentioned in it are symbolised by the various parts of Śrī-Cakra.

The Nectar Ocean or *Sudhā-sindhu* is represented in the Śrī-Cakra by what is called the *Baindava-sthāna*. It is the region of the small circle in the middle of the Cakra. In the Śrī-Cakra drawn according to Samayācāra (Sṛṣṭi-cakra), the small central circle is in the quadrangular space formed by the various intersecting triangles—the four Śiva triangles with their apex downward and the five Śakti triangles with apex upward. If the Śrī-Cakra is drawn according to the Kaula sect (Samhāra-cakra), the circle will be in the small triangle in the centre, forming the first of the five Śakti triangles with their apex going downwards and the four Śiva triangles with their apex upwards. It will be noted, that the number and the direction of the triangles vary in the two schools. Cf. illustration.

The Śrī-Cakra with forty-three triangles in it, is said to be the Home, and sometimes the Body, of Śiva-Śakti. As the Baindava-sthāna (the central circle) has all the parts of the Śrī-Cakra involved in it, it has special importance, and is specially called the Abode of Śiva-Śakti. The verse seems to imply the supremacy of the Devī over all Deities like Śiva,

Viṣṇu, Brahmā etc., who are represented as Her accessories—as mattress, throne, seat bearers etc.

9

The internal worship of Śakti, consisting in the ascent of the Kundalinī by meditation, through the various Cakras to the Sahasrāra is described here:

महीं मूलाधारे कमपि मणिपूरे हुतवहं
स्थितं स्वाधिष्ठाने हृदि मरुत-माकाश-मुपरि ।
मनोऽपि भ्रूमध्ये सकलमपि भित्वा कुलपथं
सहस्रारे पद्मे सह रहसि पत्या विहरसे ॥

Mahīm mūlādhāre kam api maṇipūre hutavaham
sthitam svādhiṣṭhāne hṛdi marutam ākāśam upari;
mano'pī bhrū-madhye sakalam api bhittvā kula-patham
sahasrāre padme saha rahasi patyā viharase.

9 Having penetrated the Prithvi (Earth) element situated in the Mulādhāra, the Jala (Water) element in the Manipūra, the Agni (Fire) element in the Svādhiṣṭhāna, the Vāyu (Air) element in the Heart or Anāhata, the Ākāśa (Sky) element above the former in the Visuddhi, and Manas (mind) in the Ājñā between the eye-brows, Thou, ascending through the Suṣumnā or the Kula Path, sportest with Thy Consort in the solitude of Sahasrāra the Thousand-Petalled Lotus (above in the head).

Notes: In this verse Svādhiṣṭhāna is placed after Maṇipūra, whereas in the usual order it is just the reverse.

It is explained that this is done to keep the Elements in their evolutionary order. For further explanation see Introduction to Verse 39.

The meditative or Samaya adoration of Tripurasundarī, is what is described herein. It consists in the awakening of the Kuṇḍalinī and directing that Power to the Sahasrāra in the head. Kuṇḍalinī is the Śakti or Power of the Jīva (or the Individual Spirit). The Jīva is a part of Śiva, the universal and transcendent Spirit, and Tripurasundarī is the name of His cosmic Śakti represented as the Universal Mother who is adored in this hymn. The Jīva being a part of Śiva, His Śakti is a part of Tripurasundarī. It is this Śakti of the Jīva that is known as Kuṇḍalinī. Śiva as the Jīva is in the subtle sphere represented by the brain in the body, which is described technically as Sahasrāra or Thousand-petalled Lotus; and the Śakti of the Jīva, known as the Kuṇḍalinī, is resting in the sphere represented by the base of the spine called Mūlādhāra, which is also called Trikoṇa. It is called Kuṇḍalinī or the Coiled-up Power, and conceived as a coiled up serpent, because the Śakti, having finished the evolution of the body together with the nervous system and the subtle body of the Jīva, has become contracted, as a result of which the Jīva is established in body-consciousness and awareness of the physical world as the sole reality. The Jīva in this state is in the imprisonment of the nervous system and apprehends Reality only through it. Now this state is the state of ignorance and involvement in Samsāra. The spinal column is what connects the Śiva as Jīva in the brain with his Śakti as Kuṇḍalinī, and spiritual enlightenment comes when the Śakti, which is sleeping or lies contracted in the Mūlādhāra, is roused up and enabled to unite with Śiva in the Sahasrāra. The Samaya or internal worship of Śakti consists in this awakening of Her through concentrated meditation and

uniting Her with Śiva. This is what is described in this verse.

In this process the nervous and psychic structure of the human personality are involved. The brain, the seat of Śiva, is what makes knowledge (Jñāna-śakti) and action (Kriyā-śakti) possible. The impulses connected with the above functions come from the brain, and travel through two main Nadis (nerves), which proceed through the left and right sides of the spine. They are called Iḍa and Piṅgala, and are, or correspond to, the afferent and the efferent nerves of modern physiology. Through the Iḍa, sensations of external contacts by the senses are carried to the brain, and through the Piṅgala the reactions of the self-conscious principle in the brain are communicated to the mind and senses. They thus link the brain centre with the base of the spine where Kuṇḍalinī is resting. Besides, from them proceed all the subsidiary nerves to all parts of the body conveying all the sense impressions to the brain and the reactions of the brain centres to them, resulting in knowledge and action.

Between the Ida and the Piṅgala, through the centre of the spine runs another nerve, the *canal centralis*. In the Yogic language of India this nerve, or what psychically corresponds to it, is called Suṣumna (also Kula-patha). The Suṣumna or the *canal centralis* is considered hollow according to the Yogins. But if it is identical with the central canal running through the spine, it is not hollow but full of what is called the spinal fluid.* It is called hollow probably because it is not constituted of nerve fibres like the other nerves, or it, like the Iḍa and the Piṅgala, is a psychic conception. Suṣumna is closed at the bottom and is inactive in man in ignorance. Now the

*The reader is requested to read an article, given as appendix, for the modern anatomist's view on these questions.

psychic process involved in spiritual enlightenment consists in the opening of the closed orifice of the Suṣumna by restraining the flow of energy through the Iḍa and the Piṅgala. This is achieved by the restraint of respiration through the practice of Prāṇāyāma, or the concentration achieved through the intense devotion of the Bhakta or the Vicāra (discriminative process) of the Jñānī. The collected and concentrated energy strikes on, and awakens, the Kuṇḍalinī, which thereupon rises up through the hollow mystic path of Suṣumna, piercing its bottom, which is closed in the state of ignorance. In its upward flow, the awakened Kuṇḍalini draws up all the life forces in the parts of the body below, leaving those parts cold. For, all those life forces are only emanations from the Kuṇḍalinī. It is only when the Suṣumna is thus opened and the psychic energy restrained from its course along the Iḍa and the Piṅgala, and made to go up the Suṣumna towards the centre in the brain, that consciousness is released from the imprisonment of the nervous system, which the Spirit as the Jīva has evolved for close association with material Nature.

The awakened Kuṇḍalinī in the course of its rise touches and brings into operation the six psychic centres (Cakras or Plexuses) corresponding to six points along the Suṣumna. These six Çakras (Plexuses) are represented as lotuses with drooping petals. The lowest at the level of the anus, is called Mūlādhāra, represented as a lotus with four petals, wherein Kuṇḍalinī dwells contracted or asleep in the state of ignorance. It is formed of Pṛthvī-tattva (Earth Element). Earth is also the last evolute of Prakṛti (Nature), after producing which the creative power remains contracted or coiled up as the Kuṇḍalinī. Above it, at the level of the genitals, is Svādhiṣṭhāna, a lotus with six petals. It is made of Agni-tattva (Fire Element). Above it at the level of the navel is the Plexus known as Maṇipūra having ten petals and composed of Jala-

tattva (Water Element).* Above that at the level of the heart is the Plexus called Anāhata, a lotus of twelve petals, consisting of Vāyu-tattva (Air Element). Above that at the level of the throat is the Viśuddhi-cakra, made of Ākāśa-tattva (Sky Element), pictured as a lotus having sixteen petals. Above even that, at the level of the eye-brows is the Ājñā-cakra as a two petalled lotus, composed of the Manas-tattva (Mind Element). Beyond that i.e. above the Kula Path at the level of the middle brain is the Thousand Petalled Lotus known as Sahasrāra, which is the seat of Śiva.

Now the roused up Kuṇḍalinī, touching each of these Cakras or Plexuses, rises up and unites with Śiva in the Sahasrāra. As the Kuṇḍalinī touches them, each of the lotuses is said to blossom, and reveal before the Jīva totally new and subtle dimensions of Reality. The gross world, which we are now aware of, is the vision of Reality when the Kuṇḍalinī is at the lowest Cakras, the Mūlādhāra, and Svādhiṣṭhāna. This gross world is perceived in the Mahākāśa, gross space. Subtler and subtler realms of Bliss-Consciousness subsisting in the new dimension of Cittākāśa (mental space) and Cidākāśa (spiritual space) are revealed as the Kuṇḍalinī touches and awakens the higher and higher Lotuses or centres. These seven centres, it is said, are related to their respective levels of consciousness in the cosmos. These levels are described as the seven regions, increasing in subtlety from the earth—the Lokas known as Bhū, Bhuvar, Suvar, Mahar, Tapa, Jana, and Satya. The centres from Mūladhārā upwards are levels from which one can relate oneself to these subtle planes of consciousness. The visions

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*In the usual way of enumeration, Svādhiṣṭhāna comes earlier and Maṇipūra afterwards. But in Saundaryalaharī it is reversed to keep up the evolutionary order of the Elements as stated earlier in this note. Cf. introductory note to Verse 39.

of the Deity that come to one are described in Verses 36 to 41 of the Text. When the Kuṇḍalinī is united with Śiva in the thousand-petalled Head-lotus known as the Sahasrāra, the higher evolution of the Jīva is completed and Absolute Consciousness, which is Absolute Bliss too, is attained by the meditating aspirant. This union takes place in the still subtler dimension of Cidākāśa (Pure Consciousness). When the Kuṇḍalainī comes down to the lower levels again, the Samādhi ends and the earth consciousness is again attained as stated in the next verse.

The Śrī-Cakra, which forms the Yantra (the diagrammatic symbol) for worship, is the symbol of the Thousand-petalled lotus in the brain, the centre of Śiva. The six psychic centres through which the Kuṇḍalinī passes are also included in the Śrī-Cakra, these being the grosser manifestations of Śiva-Śakti until they present themselves as the grossest evolute, the Element Earth. The various parts of the diagram known as Śrī-Cakra, which is of high esoteric significance, stand for all these evolutes, which are calculated as twenty-five in number. The external worshippers or the Kaulas use a modified form of it as the symbol of worship of Śiva-Śakti, whereas the pure Samaya or meditative worshippers try in meditation to rouse the Kuṇḍalinī and unite her with Śiva, as described in the verse. There is however a Miśra or mixed intermediary form of worship where external symbol and meditative processes are used for worship together with Mantras. This seems to be what most people follow. There are very few aspirants capable of pure meditative adoration.

It will be relevant to point out here that there is a view that it is not proper to identify the Yogic Cakras, Nadis etc., with the anatomy of the spinal column and the brain as understood in modern science. For, the modern anatomical

descriptions of these regions vary very much from the Yogic. So the more cautious attitude is only to maintain that there is only a correspondence and not identity, the Yogic centres being in the Sūkṣma or subtle body. For the anatomy of the spinal column from the point of view of modern science, see Appendix.

10

The descent of the Kundalinī after Samādhi to the Mūlādhāra is described in this verse.

सुधाधारासारै-श्चरणयुगलान्त-र्विगलितैः
प्रपंचं सिञ्चन्ती पुनरपि रसाम्नाय-महसः ।
अवाप्य स्वां भूमिं भुजग-निभ-मध्युष्ट-वलयं
स्वमात्मानं कृत्वा स्वपिषि कुलकुण्डे कुहरिणि ॥

Sudhā-dhārā-sārais carana-yugalāntar vigalitaiḥ
prapañcam siñcantī punar api ras'āmnāya-mahasaḥ;
avāpya svām bhūmim bhujaga-nibham adhyuṣṭa-valayam
svam ātmānam kṛtvā svapiṣi kulakuṇḍe kuhariṇi.

10 Drenching the whole manifested multiplicity (the prapañca, **here meaning the seventy two thousand** Nādis **of the** Jīva**) with the nectar flowing from Thy feet, Thou (the** Kuṇḍalinī representing Tripurasundarī**) descendest from the exuberance of the Nectarine Radiance of the Moon (here the Sahasrāra where the** Kuṇḍalinī **unites with Śiva) into the hollow of Thy own sphere in the** Mūlādhāra **at the lower end of the** Suṣumnā, **assuming Thy serpentine form (of three and a half coils) and sleepest therein.**

Notes: As a result of the successful performance of the Samaya or internal worship of Śakti through meditation, the Kuṇḍalinī, which is only another name for the Śakti of the individual Jīva lying dormant in the Mūlādhāra, is awakened and made to pass through the six plexuses (Cakras). As it passes through them, different subtle dimensions of Reality become open to the Jīva, and finally when the Kuṇḍalinī reaches the Sahasrāra, the Thousand-petalled Lotus in the brain, perfect Samādhi ensues. This is referred to in the previous verses as "Thou sportest with Thy Consort in the Lotus of Sahasrāra."

The Sahasrāra is in this verse described by the expression *Rasāmnāya-mahasaḥ*—the Nectarine Radiance of the Moon. According to the science of Yoga, the head is called the sphere of the Moon. In that sphere is the Sahasrāra or the Thousand-petalled Lotus, within which is the Śrī-Cakra. The centre of the Śrī-Cakra, the Bindu, is the place of the Devī in union with Śiva. The shower of nectar emerging from Her feet saturates the whole body-mind of the Sādhaka with bliss.

From the Sahasrāra the Kuṇḍalinī again descends to the Mūlādhāra, if she is still in identification with all the past impressions and tendencies born of the Karmas of the Jīva. It is probably for this reason that Swami Vivekananda describes Kuṇḍalinī in his Rāja Yoga thus: "Now the centre where all those residual sensations are, as it were, stored up, is called the Mūlādhāra, the root receptacle, and the coiled up energy of action is Kuṇḍalinī 'the coiled up!'" Only in the case of those whose minds have been erased of all impressions, does the Kuṇḍalinī remain in complete absorption in Śiva in the Sahasrāra and the Samādhi remains spontaneous and continuous and even irrevokable. That is probably why Sri Ramakrishna, whose mind was free from all desires, and was

naturally tending to Samādhi, created artificial desires like, 'I want to see so and so', 'I want to eat such and such a thing' etc., in order that they might exercise a downward pull on the Kuṇḍalinī and prevent her absolute mergence in Śiva.

Regarding this subject of the rousing of the Kuṇḍalinī and her descent, it will be relevant to quote Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa's views on it, as the Master is expounding it from his own experience and not from mere book lore. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Vol. I, p. 499) he says: "Yoga is not possible if the mind dwells on Kāminī-Kāñcana (lust and gold). The mind of a worldly man generally moves among the three lower centres—those at the navel, at the sexual organ and at the organ of evacuation. After great effort and spiritual practice the Kuṇḍalinī is awakened. According to the Yogi there are three nerves (Nadis) in the spinal column —Ida, Piṅgala and Suṣumna. Along the Suṣumna are six lotuses or centres, the lowest being known as Mūlādhāra. Then comes successively Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddhi and Ājñā. These are the six centres. The Kuṇḍalinī, when awakened, passes through the lower centres and comes to the Anāhata, which is at the heart level. It stays there. At that time, the mind of the aspirant is withdrawn from the three lower centres. He feels the awakening of the Divine Consciousness. In mute wonder he sees that radiance and cries out: 'What is this! what is this!.'

"After passing through the six centres, the Kuṇḍalinī reaches the Thousand-petalled Lotus known as the Sahasrāra, and the aspirant goes into Samādhi.

"According to the Vedas, these centres are called 'Bhumis' or planes. There are seven such planes. The centre at the heart corresponds to the fourth plane of the Vedas. According to the Tantra there is in this centre a lotus called Anāhata, with twelve petals.

"The centre known as the Viśuddhi is the fifth plane. This centre is at the throat and has a lotus with sixteen petals. When the Kuṇḍalinī reaches this plane, the devotee longs to talk and hear only about God. Conversations on worldly subjects, on 'sex and gold', cause him great pain. He leaves the place where people talk on these matters.

"Then comes the sixth plane, corresponding to the centre known as the Ājñā. This centre is located between the eyebrows, and it has a lotus with two petals. When the Kuṇḍalinī reaches this, the aspirant sees the form of God. But still there remains a slight barrier between the devotee and God. It is like a light inside a lantern. You may think you have touched the light, but in reality you cannot because of a barrier like glass.

"And last of all is the seventh plane, which according to Tantra is the centre of the Thousand-petalled Lotus (Sahasrāra). When the Kuṇḍalinī arrives there, the aspirant goes into Samādhi. In that lotus dwells Sat-cid-ānanda Śiva, the Absolute. There the Kuṇḍalinī, the Awakened Power (Śakti), unites with Śiva. This is known as the union of Śiva and Śakti.

"....................In that state the life force lingers for twenty-one days and then passes out. But Iśvarakotis, such as Incarnations, can come down from this state of Samādhi. They can come down from this exalted state, because they like to live in the company of devotees and enjoy the love of God. God retains in them the Ego of Knowledge or the Ego of Devotion, so that they may teach men. Their minds move between the sixth and the seventh planes."

Further he says (Gospel Vol. II P. 829): "Sometimes the spiritual current rises through the spine, crawling like an ant. Sometimes in Samādhi, the soul swims joyfully in the ocean of Divine ecstasy like a fish. Sometimes like a

monkey, that current suddenly with one jump reaches the Sahasrāra. Sometimes again the spiritual current rises like a bird hopping from one branch to another. Sometimes the spiritual current moves up like a snake going in a zig-zag way; at last it reaches the head and one goes into Samādhi. A man's spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless the Kuṇḍalinī is aroused. One's spiritual consciousness is not awakened by the mere reading of books. One should also pray to God. The Kuṇḍalinī is aroused if the aspirant feels restless for God. Talk on knowledge from mere study and heresay! What will it accomplish?

"Just before attaining this state of mind, it has been revealed to me how the Kuṇḍalinī is aroused, how the lotuses of the different centres blossom forth, and how all this culminate in Samādhi. This is a very secret experience. I saw a boy of twenty-two or twenty-three years old, exactly resembling me, enter the Suṣumna nerve and commune with the lotuses, touching them with his tongue. He began with the centre at the anus and passed through the centres at the sex organ, navel and so on. The different lotuses of those centres—the four-petalled, six-petalled, ten-petalled and so forth—had been drooping. At his touch they stood erect.

"When he reached the heart—I distinctly remember it—and communed with the lotus there, touching it with his tongue, the twelve-petalled lotus, which was hanging head down, stood erect and opened its petals. Then he came to the sixteen-petalled lotus at the throat level and the two petalled lotus in the forehead. And last of all, the Thousand-petalled lotus in the head blossomed. Since then I have been in this state."

11

The making of the Śrī-Cakra, which is the most noted diagrammatical representation of the Devi in Her transcendence and also in Her cosmic manifestation, and which is meditated upon in the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus in the head and also worshipped externally inscribed on a Bhurja-patra (parchment) or metal, is now described.

चतुर्भिः श्रीकण्ठैः शिवयुवतिभिः पञ्चभिरपि
प्रभिन्नाभिः शंभोर्नवभिरपि मूलप्रकृतिभिः ।
चतुश्चत्वारिंशद्-वसुदल-कलाश्र-त्रिवलय-
त्रिरेखाभिः सार्धं तव शरणकोणाः परिणताः ।।

Caturbhiḥ śrī-kaṇṭhaiḥ śiva-yuvatibhiḥ pañcabhir api
prabhinnābhiḥ śambhor navabhir api mūla-prakṛtibhiḥ;
catuś-catvārimśad vasu-dala-kalāśra-tri-valaya-
tri-rekhābhiḥ sārdham tava śaraṇa-koṇāḥ pariṇatāḥ.

11 The four Śrī-Kaṇṭhas (Siva-cakras) and the five Śiva-yuvatis (Śakti-cakras) are the nine Mūla-prakṛtis or basic manifestations, and these are apart from Śambhu (the Bindu or small circle in the centre). Then there are two lotuses, one of eight petals and another of sixteen, besides three surrounding circles and three lines. This forms Thy mansion with forty-four Konas (triangles).

Notes: 1. There are two schools of the Śakti Cult known as the Samayācarins and the Kaulas. The philosophical differences between them are dealt with in the Introduction, and will be explained also in the comments on

the relevant verses that are to come. Here their main difference in the drawing of the Śrī-Cakra, also known as Śrī-Yantra, has to be explained. The text of the Saundarya-laharī is put in such a way that it can be interpreted as applicable to the practice of both the schools.

In the Samaya version of the Śrī-Cakra (known as Sṛṣṭi-cakra), the Śrīkānṭhas or Śaiva triangles are four, and they are drawn with their apex downward, and the Śiva-yuvatis or Śakti triangles are five with apex upward. The central small circle (Bindu) is in the quadrangular space in the middle formed by the intersecting triangles. In the Kaula version (known as Samhāra-cakra), the Śaiva triangles are four with apex upwards, and the Śakti triangles are five with apex downwards. The Bindu (the small central circle) is in the small central triangle with apex downwards.

These nine triangles are to be distinguished from Śambhu, or the Bindu (the central circle), which represents Śiva-Śakti in union, known technically as Sādākhya-kalā, out of whom have come all the cosmic manifestations represented by the four Śrīkanṭhas and the five Śiva-yuvatis, which are placed in juxtaposition to indicate that Śiva and Śakti are both involved in creation. These triangles together are called the nine Mūla-prakṛtis, because they represent the Source Substance of the whole Cosmos. This Mūla-prakṛti, according to the Śākta philosophy, is said to consist of twenty-five categories representing Śakti and Śiva in evolved state. These, as counted from the gross to the subtle, are: The five gross elements, the five Tanmatras, the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, Mind, Māyā, Śuddha-Vidyā, Maheśvara, and Sadāśiva. According to other enumerations there are many more categories. These are to be taken as included in the twenty-five.

These nine triangles constitute the core of the Śrī-Cakra.

They form forty-three Koṇas (triangles)—one in the central triangle (*trikoṇa*), eight in the first figure surrounding it (*aṣṭakoṇa*), twenty in the next set of two surrounding figures together (*daśāra-dvitaya*) and fourteen in the last figure (*caturdaśāra*). Thus we get forty-three Konas. To this is to be added the central circle (Bindu). Thus we get the 44 items forming the central core of Śrī-Cakra mentioned in the verse as *śaraṇa-koṇa* (abode) of the Devī.

Besides, there are in the diagram of the Śrī-Cakra surrounding it, the two sets of lotuses (*padmas*), one consisting of eight petals (*aṣṭa-dala*) and the other of sixteen (*ṣodaśa-dala*), the three circles (*vṛtta-traya*), and the three boundary lines (*bhūpura-traya*). These external portions are regarded as merged in the triangles forming the core of the Śrī-Cakra—the first (i.e the *aṣṭa-dala*) in the central triangle (*trikoṇa*), forming the core of the Śrī-Cakra, the second (*ṣodaśa-dala*) in the eight-cornered figure (*aṣṭakoṇa*), the triad of circles (*vṛtta-traya*) in the two ten-cornered figures (*daśāra-dvitaya*) next to it, and the fourth (*bhūpura-traya*) in the fourteen-cornered figure (*catur-daśāra*) next to it.

In the Tāntrika tradition there are three kinds of symbols for the Deity. These are the *vigrahas* or images, the *Yantras*, (also known as Cakras or the geometrical designs) and *Mantras* or the sound symbols. Of these, the first two are worshipped externally, and the last used for communion through silent repetition (Japa). The Uttara Kaulas or Gaudīya Saktas consider the body also as a symbol of the Devī for worship. A symbol is considered as identical with the Devatā. Of all the Yantras used for the worship of the Devī, the Śrī-Cakra (Śrī-Yantra) is the most famous, and all initiated followers of the Devī cult will have it drawn or engraved in metal, bark etc. and established in a place for periodical adoration.

Besides the distinction of Śrṣṭi-cakra and Samhāra-cakra, there are three ways of designing the Cakra according to three different traditions which are called *Meru-prastāra, Kailāsa-prastāra* and *Bhūprastāra.* In the design and placement of the various deities in different parts of the Cakra as also in worship, there are differences in these traditions. In the centre of the design, in the Bindu is placed Devī Tripurasundarī or Śrī-Vidyā as one with Śiva, and in the other parts of the Cakra, the Devis emanating from Her.

The Śrī-Cakra is considered a complete representation of the Devī in the transcendent and the evolved conditions. Thus the Śrī-Cakra represents Śiva-Śakti, on the one hand, as the Sahasrāra or the Thousand-petalled Lotus in the brain, and, on the other, as the evolved categories of the mind and the five elements—Ākāśa, Vāyu, Agni, Apaḥ and Bhūḥ, which are the constituents of the six Lotuses (the plexuses) through which the Kuṇḍalinī rises to the Sahasrāra in her course through the Suṣumna. They are included in the Śrī-Cakra, worshipping which is equal to adoring the Devī in all the Lotuses and the Sahasrāra. Besides thus representing the microcosm (the individual), the Śrī Cakra stands also for the macrocosm (the whole universe extended as all the spheres) with the Devī as its source. The various elements constituting the Lotuses are Cosmic Elements too. Thus the Śrī-Cakra also stands for the Devi or Śakti evolved as the universe. The Śrī-Cakra is thus in every way considerd the highest symbol for the adoration of the Devī. It is therefore called the Abode of Śiva-Śakti or sometimes their Body.

Further, about the symbolism of Śrī-Cakra, Arthur Avalon states as follows in his translation of Anandalaharī: In Kāmika, a Mantra-sāstra, the human body (the microcosm) as also the whole universe (or the macrosm) is taken to be the

Śrī-Cakra and their correspondence is given according to the Kaulas as below:

Microcosm

Five Śakti angles	*Four Śaiva angles*
1. Tvak (Skin)	6. Majjā (Marrow)
2. Asṛk (blood)	7. Śukla (Semen)
3. Māmsa (flesh)	8. Prāṇa (Vital force)
4. Meda (Lymph)	9. Jīva (Soul)
5. Asti (bones)	

Macrocosm

Śakti angles	*Śiva angles*
Five Bhūtas, five Tanmatras, five Karmendriyas, five Prāṇas and Manas	Māyā, Suddha-Vidyā Maheśvara and Sadāśiva.

Standing outside these twenty-five categories are two: (1) Māyā in combination with Maheśvara turned into the Jīva the spirit in bondage, and (2) Suddha-Vidyā in union with Sadāśiva become the Kalā known as the Sādākhyā represented as the small central circle in the Baindavasthāna. The Sādākhyā, the source of all categories, is the pre-creative state of Śiva-Śakti in union, preparatory to the separation as Prakāśa and Vimarśa (Subject and Object). It transcends all the Kalās. Nāda, Bindu and Kalā are the three stresses in the process of the Subject-Objectless Reality polarising into the Subject and the Object. The three Puras are these three stresses and Tripurasundarī is the Divine Śakti transcending the three stresses but yet expressing and embodying them. The three stresses go together, though they are analysed as three. The creative will 'May I be many' is the vibration technically termed as Nāda (cosmic sound). In it is involved the other stresses called Bindu, and Kalā. It is the state wherein the Prakāśa and the Vimarśa, the Subject and the Object, begin to be distinct but not divided. The Object or

the This-sense is the Vimarśa, the Reflector, whose presence alone makes the Pure Consciousness or Prakāśa realise Himself as the 'I'. That is why the Devī is called in verse 7 as Śiva's '*āhopuruṣikā*' i.e. Pride, the I-sense embodied. The appellation Sādākhyā applied to Her means, *Sat ākhyā yataḥ*—that state in which there is the first notion of being, i.e. the world experience with this notion of 'I am'.

The meditation on Tripurasundarī as practised by some, is as follows;

Bālārkāyuta-tejasāṁ tṛ-nayanāṁ raktāmbarollā-sinīṁ
nān'ālamkṛti-rājamāna -vapuṣāṁ bālo'ḍurāṭ-śekharām
hastair ikṣu-dhanus sṛiṇiṁ suma-sarāṁ pāsaṁ mudā bibbratīṁ
Śrī-Cakra sthita-sundarīṁ tri-jagatām ādhāra-bhūtāṁ smaret

"Possessed of the radiance of a thousand morning suns; having three eyes; resplendent in Her cloth of reddish tinge; with Her form beautified with various decorations; wearing a crown with the crescent moon in it; sporting in Her hand a bow of sugarcane, goad, arrows of flowers and a cord—on the Divine Beauty of this description dwelling in the middle of Śrī-Cakra supporting all the worlds, I meditate."

In verse 7 another meditation on the Divine Mother in Maṇipūra-cakra has been given.

12

The splendrous beauty of Tripurasundarī is described figuratively.

त्वदीयं सौन्दर्यं तुहिनगिरिकन्ये तुलयितुं
कवीन्द्राः कल्पन्ते कथमपि विरिञ्चि-प्रभृतयः ।
यदालोकौत्सुक्यादमरललना यान्ति मनसा
तपोभि-र्दुष्प्रापामपि गिरिश-सायुज्य-पदवीम् ।।

Tvadīyam saundaryam Tuhina-giri-kanye tulayitum
kavīndrāḥ kalpante katham api Viriñci-prabhṛtayaḥ;
yadāloka'utsukyād amara-lalanā yānti manasā
tapobhir duṣ-prāpām api giriśa-sāyujya-padavīm.

12 O Daughter of the Mountain of Snow! The greatest of poets like Brahmā—in trying assiduously to portray Thy beauty, fail to find any other object to describe it through comparison. For, even the heavenly damsels (who are the most noted entities available to compare in respect of beauty) attain, out of their eagerness to experience Thy beauty, only to an imaginative identification with the State of Oneness with Śiva, which is difficult to gain even by severe austerities. (They seek to do so because only Thy Eternal Consort Śiva has the privilege of absorption in Thy beauty, and oneness with Him alone can help one experience it.)

Notes: The verse attempts to describe the incomparableness of the beauty of the Devī through a highly indirect poetic device. The heavenly damsels are the most beautiful beings known to poetic fancy. When the poet seeks to describe the Devi's beauty by comparing it to theirs, he finds that this will be most inappropriate. For, these damsels, absolutely dissatisfied with their own beauty and desiring to enhance it, find that the only way for it is to become participants in the Devi's beauty vicariously by meditating on Śiva and attaining to oneness with Him, the Devī's Eternal Consort, who alone has a full experience of Her beauty and is steeped in it.

In this connection it will be worthwhile to note what Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa says about the beauty of Tripurasundarī.

Swami Saradananda says in his biography of the Great Master: "The visions of Gods and Goddesses he had were numerous, ranging from the two-armed to the ten-armed forms of the Mother. ....Although all the forms of the Mother were extraordinary in beauty, the Master maintained that they were not worth comparison in that respect to that of Rājarājesvarī, otherwise called Ṣōdaśī (the same as what is known in southern tradition as Tripurasundarī). The Master said about Her, "I saw in a vision the beauty of the person of Ṣōdaśī, which melted and spread all around" illumining the quarters." (*The Great Master*).

13

How for those who seek it, the grace of the Devi can enchance their attractiveness, is described in rather erotic terms (*Śṛṅgāra*) common in Indian poetics:

नरं वर्षीयांसं नयनविरसं नर्मसु जडं
तवापांगालोके पतित-मनुधावन्ति शतशः ।
गलद्वेणीबन्धाः कुचकलश-विस्रस्त-सिचया
हटात् त्रुटयत्काञ्चयो विगलित-दुकूला युवतयः ।।

Naram varṣīyāmsam nayana-virasam narmasu jaḍam
tavā'pāṅgā'loke patitam anudhāvanti śataśaḥ;
galad-veṇī-bandhāḥ kuca-kalaśa-visrasta-śicayā
haṭhāt truṭyat-kāñcyo vigalita-dukūlā yuvatayaḥ.

If Thy gracious side glance falls on even a very decrepit old manwho is ugly to look at, and whose erotic sensibilities are dead, he will be followed in all haste in

their hundreds by love-lorn young women having their locks scattered, their rotund breasts exposed by the loosening of their brassieres, and their girdles suddenly broken in excitement, thus letting their wearing clothes slip down.

14

This verse describes how the Divine Mother Tripura-sundari is both transcendent and immanent.

क्षितौ षट्पञ्चाशद्-द्विसमधिक-पञ्चाश-दुदके
हुताशे द्वाषष्टि-श्चतुरधिक-पञ्चाश-दनिले ।
दिवि द्विःषट्त्रिंशन्-मनसि च चतुःषष्टिरिति ये
मयूखा-स्तेषा-मप्युपरि तव पादांबुज-युगम् ॥ १४ ॥

Kṣitau ṣaṭ-pañcāśad dvi-samadhika-pañcāśad udake
hutāśe dvā-ṣaṣṭiś catur-adhika-pañcāśad anile;
divi dviḥ-ṣaṭtriṃśan manasi ca catuḥ-ṣaṣṭir iti ye
mayūkhās teṣām apy upari tava pādāmbuja yugam.

In the Bindu in the centre of the Sahasrāra is Thy transcendent Station (*pādāmbuja-yugam* or pair of lotus feet) far above the Cakras to which Thy Rays (or luminous-manifestation as Śaktis) reach in the following combinations —fifty six in the Mūlādhāra which partakes of the character of Prithvi (Earth Element), fifty-two in Maṇipūra which partakes of the character of Jala (Water Element), sixty two in the Svādhiṣṭhāna which partakes of the character of Agni (Fire Element), fifty four in Anahata which partakes

of the character of Vayu (Air Element), seventy-two in Viśuddhi which partakes of the nature of Akasa (Ether Element), and sixty four in Ājñā which partakes of the character of Manas (Mind).

Notes: The functioning of Tripurasundarī the Divine Mother, who is the source of the totality of the Cosmos or Macrocosm (Brahmāṇda) as also of the individual body-mind Microcosm (Piṇḍāṇḍa), is described here in terms of Her diagrammatic symbol, the Śrī-Cakra, which stands for Sahasrāra, the Thousand petalled Lotus in the brain, the centre of which, known as Bindu, is the seat of Tripurasundarī. That centre is indicated in the verse as *pādāmbuja-yugam* or pair of lotus feet, here translated as Thy Station. From here 360 *Raśmis* or Rays are said to proceed to the six Cakras beginning with Mūlādhāra, which are indicated in the verse by the names of their constituent elements like Pṛthvi and so on. Rays (Raśmis) are the potencies of the universal Śakti, Tripurasundarī. All the Cakras have an individual reference and also a cosmic reference. In the cosmic sense the 360 rays are the various Mother-powers, all manifestations of Tripurasundarī, by whom the various dimensions of the Cosmos are controlled and upheld. In the individual sense the 360 Raśmis are the main nerves proceeding from what corresponds in the nervous system to the six Cakras in the Suṣumna and expands as the 72,000 nerves (*nāḍis*) controlling the body according to the Paurāṇika and Tāntrika conceptions. They all have their source in the regions corresponding to the six Cakras, which are referred to in the verse by the names of the Elements, of which they are constituted. Thus the verse describes Tripurasundarī as the Supreme Mistress of the Macrocosm (Brahmāṇda) and the Microcosm (Piṇḍāṇda). Just as the sun is the centre and support of all the rays radiating

from it, Tripurasundarī is the centre and support of the whole cosmos as also of all individuals constituting it.

15

How poetic faculty is stimulated by contemplation of Tripurasundari is described below:

शरज्ज्योत्स्ना-शुद्धां शशियुत-जटाजूट-मकुटां
वर-त्रास-त्राण-स्फटिकघुटिका-पुस्तक-कराम् ।
सकृन्न त्वा नत्वा कथमिव सतां सन्निदधते
मधु-क्षीर-द्राक्षा-मधुरिम-धुरीणाः फणितयः ।। १५ ।।

Śaraj-jyotsnā-śuddhām śaśi-yuta-jaṭā-jūṭa-makuṭām
vara-trāsa-trāṇa-sphaṭika-ghuṭikā-pustaka karām;
sakṛn na tvā natvā katham iva satām sannidadhate
madhu-kṣīra-drākṣā-madhurima-dhurīṇāḥ phaṇitayaḥ.

How can torrents of words, excelling even honey, milk and grapes, help flowing from the mouth of good men who but once make prostration to Thee who art endowed with the lustre of the autumnal moon, who art holding Thy two hands in the pose of granting boons and offering protection, and sporting in the other two a rosary of crystal beads and a book, and who wearest the crescent moon in Thy crown of plaited locks!

Notes: It is to be noted that the Devī is described here as holding Her two hands in the pose of granting boons and offering protection, whereas in Verse 7, she is described as having the distinguishing feature of not demonstrating her

possession of such powers by any pose of hands, like other Deities. The explanation may perhaps be that these two verses refer to two different conceptions of the Mother.

16

Again the worship of the Devī as Aruṇā, **the Crimson-coloured Goddess, is praised as the means for attaining great literary proficiency and poetic genius.**

कवीन्द्राणां चेतः-कमलवन-बालातप-रुचिं
भजन्ते ये सन्तः कतिचिदरुणामेव भवतीम् ।
विरिञ्चि-प्रेयस्या-स्तरुणतर-शृङ्गारलहरी-
गभीराभि-र्वाग्भिर्विदधति सतां रञ्जनममी ॥ १६ ॥

Kavīndrāṇām cetaḥ-kamala-vana-bāl'ātapa-rucim
bhajante ye santaḥ katicid aruṇām eva bhavatīm;
viriñci-preyasyās taruṇatara śṛṅgāra-laharī-
gabhīrabhir vāgbhir vidadhati satām rañjanam amī.

O Mother, Thou Aruṇā, **the Crimson-coloured Goddess, art like the light of morning's rising sun to the lotus flowers constituted of the minds of gifted poets (helping, as Thou dost, their poesy to blossom forth). Therefore, those devoted men who adore Thee become capable of delighting the minds of assemblies of literary connoisseurs with the majestic flow of their words surging like waves of erotic sentiments emanating from youthful Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning.**

17

This verse along with the previous two is concerned with meditation for those who desire great literary excellence.

सवित्रीभि-र्वाचां शशि-मणि-शिला-भङ्ग-रुचिभि-
र्वशिन्याद्याभि-स्त्वां सह जननि संचिन्तयति यः ।
स कर्ता काव्यानां भवति महतां भङ्गिरुचिभि-
र्वचोभि-र्वाग्देवी-वदन-कमलामोद-मधुरैः ।। १७ ।।

Savitrībhir vācām śaśi-maṇi-śilā-bhaṅga-rucibhir
vaśiny'ādyābhis tvām saha janani saṁcintayati yaḥ;
sa kartā kāvyānām bhavati mahatām bhaṅgi-rucibhiḥ.
vacobhir vāgdevī-vadana-kamal'āmoda madhuraiḥ.

O Mother! Those who meditate on Thee in association with Vaśinī and allied Deities—who are all the sources of speech and whose radiance resembles the lustre of freshly cut Candrakānta gem (moon stone)—can become the authors of poetical works as delightful as those of great ones (like Vālmīki and Kālidāsa), and sweet with the fragrance of the mouth of Sarasvatī, the goddess of poesy and learning.

Notes: Vaśinī, Kāmeśvarī, Mōdinī, Vimalā, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī and Kaulinī are the eight deities who are referred to as the sources of speech and therefore as aspects of Sarasvatī who is the Deity of speech. These eight Deities preside over the eight group of the letters of the alphabet—a-, ka-, ca-, ṭa-, ta-, pa-, ya-, sa-, and śa. They have all their respective places in the Śrī-Cakra. Meditation on Tripura-

sundarī as including in Herself all these Deities is recommended for the growth of poetic capabilities. 'Fragrance of the mouth of Sarasvatī' means that the poet-devotee will be like an embodiment of Sarasvatī Herself in respect of literary excellence.

18

In this and the following verse are described certain meditations that make one extremely attractive to women.

तनुच्छायाभिस्ते तरुण-तरणि-श्रीसरणिभि-
र्दिवं सर्वा-मुर्वी-मरुणिमनि मग्नां स्मरति यः ।
भवन्त्यस्य त्रस्य-द्वनहरिण-शालीन-नयनाः
सहोर्वश्या वश्याः कति कति न गीर्वाण-गणिकाः ॥१८॥

Tanuc-chāyabhis te taruṇa-taraṇi-śrī-saraṇibhir
divam sarvām urvīm aruṇimani magnām smarati yaḥ;
bhavanty asya trasyad-vana-hariṇa-śālīna-nayanāḥ
sahorvaśyā vaśyāḥ kati kati na gīrvāṇa-gaṇikāḥ.

How can numerous celestial courtesans like Urvaśī with eyes resembling in beauty those of timid does of the forest, help being attracted by a person who meditates on the beauty of Thy form which bathes the heaven and the earth in its crimson radiance resembling the rising sun.

Notes: The verse does not mean that a devotee as described above attracts women consciouly or runs after them. He becomes so attractive in form that women may run after him, but he remains unperturbed and looks upon all their

attractiveness as a trifle, having experienced the divine beauty of the Mother.

19

The same subject (Madana) as in the above is dealt with in another meditation:

मुखं बिन्दुं कृत्वा कुचयुगमध-स्तस्य तदधो
हरार्धं ध्यायेद्यो हरमहिषि ते मन्मथकलाम् ।
स सद्यः संक्षोभं नयति वनिता इत्यतिलघु
त्रिलोकीमप्याशु भ्रमयति रवीन्दु-स्तनयुगाम् ।। १९ ।।

Mukham bindum kṛtvā kuca-yugam adhas tasya tad-adho
harā'rdham dhyāyet yo Haramahiṣi te manmatha-kalām;
sa sadyaḥ saṃkṣobham nayati vanitā ity'atilaghu
trilokīm apy'āśu bhramayati ravīndu-stana-yugām.

O Consort of Hara! A votary who thinks of a woman's face in the Bindu (the dot in the triangle), her twin breasts below it and 'the half of Hara' (*harārdha*), still below, and contemplates Thy *Manmathakalā* on those spots (and thus gets identified with her in meditation) will quickly stir the mind of any woman. This indeed is a trifle for him. For, in no time he can fascinate even the Triloki (the three worlds conceived as a woman) with the sun and moon as breasts.

Notes: To many, meditations of the type given in this and the previous two verse may look jarring in a devotional text like the *Saundaryalaharī*. It may not appear so, when it

is remembered that the Śakti cult stands for Bhukti (enjoyment) and Mukti (liberation). The Vedic religion stood for all the four values of life—Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksa. So meditation suited for aspirants after all these values are found in this hymn. Pure devotees need not adopt them.

There is also another view about this meditation which is called *Kāmakalā-dhyāna*. According to this view the meditation is really on the form of the Devī and the purpose of it is the overcoming of Kāma or sexuality, just as the Bhāgavata claims that the devout study of the Rāsakrīḍā episode in the Bhāgavata with full faith in the divinity of Kṛṣṇa is Hṛdroga-śamanam (what leads to the erasing of the universal disease of the heart, namely, sexuality). It is probably with reference to this view of the verse that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says in his Devī-bhujaṅga that by identifying oneself in meditation with the Devī's parts, one gets identification with Her. The verse runs as follows:

Mahā-mantra-rājanta-bījam parākhyam
svato nyasta-bindum svayam nyasta-hārdam;
bhavad-vaktra-vakṣoja-guhy'ābhidhānam
svarūpam sakṛd bhāvayet sa tvam eva

20

Meditation for gaining other extraordinary powers are given in the following verse:

किरन्ती-मङ्गेभ्यः किरण-निकुरुम्बामृतरसं
हृदि त्वा-माधत्ते हिमकरशिला-मूर्तिमिव यः ।
स सर्पाणां दर्पं शमयति शकुन्ताधिप इव
ज्वरप्लुष्टान् दृष्ट्या सुखयति सुधाधार-सिरया ॥२०॥

Kirantīm aṅgebhyaḥ kiraṇa-nikurumbā'mṛta-rasam
hṛdi tvām ādhatte hima-kara-śilāmūrthim iva yaḥ;
sa sarpāṇām darpam śamayati śakunt'ādhipa iva
jvara-pluṣṭān dṛṣṭyā sukhayati sudhādhāra-sirayā.

He who meditates on Thee, who sends forth luminous waves of Bliss from Thy body as an image of moonstone does, will be capable of humbling the pride and ferocity of serpents by his mere look, like Garuḍa himself. Nay, like the nectar-showering Nādi (nerve), his look can cure any ailment, including the afflictions of fever.

21

The meditations described earlier are for persons prompted by worldly desires—the pursuit of Artha and Kāma. In the following verse is given a meditation for men of purified mind who seek Mokṣa or liberation from the clutches of materiality.

तटिल्लेखा-तन्वीं तपन-शशि-वैश्वानर-मयीं
निषण्णां षण्णामप्युपरि कमलानां तव कलाम् ।
महापद्माटव्यां मृदित-मलमायेन मनसा
महान्तः पश्यन्तो दधति परमाह्लाद-लहरीम् ॥ २१ ॥

Taṭil-lekhā-tanvīm tapana-śaśi-vaiśvānara-mayīm
niṣaṇṇām ṣaṇṇām apy upari kamalānām tava kalām;
mahā-padmā'tavyām mṛdita-mala-māyena manasā
mahāntaḥ paśyanto dadhati paramā'hlāda-laharīm.

The noble spiritual aspirants, whose minds are free from impurities like lust and greed and from the hold of Māyā **consisting of ignorance, egotism and the like, are filled with thrills of spiritual Bliss by experiencing Thy lightning-like** Kalā (Śakti **in union with** Śiva **known as** Sadākhyā) **in the core of the Thousand-petalled Lotus, which transcends the six lotuses beginning with the** Mūlā-dhāra **inclusive of Thy manifestations as fire, sun and moon in them.**

Notes: The lightning-like Kalā referred to here is Sādākhya-Kalā, which is a special technical expression to denote the Śaktī in the creative role, known also as Mahā-tripurasundarī. For a detailed exposition of the meaning of the concept, reference may be made to Notes on Verse 35.

The six lotuses beginning with the Mūlādhāra are explained in the notes on verse 9. The Mūlādhāra and Svā-dhiṣṭhāna are grouped together as the region of darkness where the Devi manifests as Fire. This region terminates in Brahmagranthi (the knot of Brahmā). The significance of Granthis is probably 'a level of consciousness'. Brahmagranthi is the terminus of physical consciousness. The two Cakras above it, the Maṇipūra and the Anāhata are terminated in Viṣṇu-granthi, which is the region of Sun and therefore of light. The two Cakras above it, the Viśuddhi and the Ājñā, terminate in Rudragranthi. It is the region of the Luminous Moon. Still above is the thousand-petalled lotus, the abode of Śiva-Śakthi as the Creative Stress known as Sādākhya-Kalā. That transcendent plane is called Jyotirmaṇḍala in contrast to the lower spheres.

22

The supremely gracious nature of the Devi is described in the verse:

भवानि त्वं दासे मयि वितर दृष्टिं सकरुणां
इति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः ।
तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निजसायुज्य-पदवीं
मुकुन्द-ब्रह्मेन्द्र-स्फुट-मकुट-नीराजितपदाम् ।। २२ ।।

Bhavāni tvam dāse mayi vitara dṛṣṭim sakaruṇām
iti stotum vāñcan kathayati Bhavāni tvam iti yaḥ;
tadaiva tvam tasmai diśasi nija-sāyujya-padavīm
mukunda-brahmendra-sphuṭa-makuṭa-nīrājita-padām.

Whoever, desiring to pray to Thee in terms like 'Oh Bhavāni, **bestow Thy gracious glance on me, Thy servant, even before he utters '*Bhavāni tvam*' (May I) become Thou', Thou art wont to bestow on him the status of oneness with Thy feet, at which Divinities like** Viṣṇu, Brahmā **and Indra are performing the lustration ceremony with the brilliance of their diadems (as they bow down their heads in prostration).**

Notes: In the first line of the Verse, 'Bhavāni tvam' is in the vocative case, and is part of a prayer, addressing the Devi as 'O Bhavani or Consort of Śiva.' There is a pun on the word as used in the second line. It is used there as a verb in the first person of the imperative mood and means—*Bhavāni* = May I become *tvam* = Thou. This conveys the meaning of the Vedantic dictum 'That Thou art'. The Devi is so gracious towards Her devotees who serve Her and

surrender to Her in absolute devotion, that She bestows on them much more than they have in mind to pray for. He prays for Her grace only, but She gives Herself to him by raising him to Her own Status. This is an emphatic assertion of the idea that the Advaitic consciousness can be had only through Divine grace, and not through the scholastic understanding of the Mahāvākya—*Tat tvam asi,* or Thou art That. Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa expresses this idea beautifully in the parable of the faithful servant. A gardener works hard and pleases the Master with the plentiful produce he raises from the garden. The master, being pleased with him beyond measure, seats him on his own seat and tells him, "You are as dear to me as myself." But if the servant sits on the seat of the Master without such approval, he will be ejected. The Advaitic consciousness is thus a gift that the grace of God alone can give. Texts like the Bhāgavata, Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa and Avadhūta Gītā support this doctrine.

23

The verse that follows is of great doctrinal importance.

त्वया हृत्वा वामं वपु-रपरितृप्तेन मनसा
शरीरार्धं शंभो-रपरमपि शङ्के हृतमभूत् ।
यदेतत् त्वद्रूपं सकलमरुणाभं त्रिनयनं
कुचाभ्यामानम्रं कुटिल-शशिचूडालमकुटम् ॥ २३ ॥

Tvayā hṛtvā vāmam vapur aparitṛptena manasā
śarīr'ārdham śambhor aparam api śaṅke hṛtam abhūt;
yad etat tvadrūpam sakalam aruṇābham trinayanam
kucābhyām ānamram kuṭila-śaśi-cūḍāla-makuṭam.

I have a feeling that, unsatisfied even after having appropriated the left half of Śambhu (Śiva) as Ardhanarīśvara, (a form half man and half woman), Thou hast also invaded his right half; for Thy form that shines in my heart is totally crimson in complexion and slightly bent by the weight of the two breasts, besides having three eyes and the crescent moon in the diadem.

Notes: In the Ardhanārīśvara (androgyne) form, Śiva's left side is depicted in the shape of the Devi, in colour, contours etc. appropriate to those of a woman.. The Devi and Śiva are conceived here as half and half of the Deity, and thus, Śiva and Śakti are here of equal importance. Prakṛti, the Devī, is here the power of Puruṣa or Śiva, the Absolute Being. Power and Power-Holder are identical like fire and its brilliance—distinct but not different. The devotee-poet, however, finds in his meditation that in the form that manifests in his heart, the features of the Devī like crimson complexion, breasts, three eyes, the crescent moon in the crown etc., have invaded and overshadowed the white colour etc. of the Śiva-half on the right, thus making one feel that She has absorbed Śiva into Herself. This gives ground to the doctrine of the Śākta sect known as the Kaulas, who maintain that in the creative cycle Śakti has absorbed the Śiva-tattva, and She the Śakti alone need be worshipped. In the light of this and some other verses Saundaryalaharī seems to support the Kaula doctrine also. See Introduction.

24

The supreme place of Sakti in creation is asserted in this verse.

जगत्सूते धाता हरिरवति रुद्रः क्षपयते

तिरस्कुर्वन्नेतत् स्वमपि वपु-रीश-स्तिरयति ।

सदा पूर्वः सर्वं तदिद-मनुगृह्णाति च शिव-
स्तवाज्ञा-मालम्ब्य क्षणचलितयो-र्भ्रूलतिकयोः ॥२४॥

Jagat sūte dhātā harir avati rudraḥ kṣapayate
tiraskurvan etat svam api vapur īśas tirayati;
sadā-pūrvaḥ sarvam tad idam anugṛhṇāti ca Śivas-
tavājñām ālambya kṣaṇa-calitayor bhrū-latikayoḥ.

Brahmā brings forth the universe; Hari (Visṇu) sustains and protects it; Rudra destroys it; and Isa (Maheśvara) absorbs all these Deities (including the universe in involution) into Himself and disappears into Sadāśiva (the Ultimate Category). Then (when it is time for a new cycle of creation to begin) Sadāśiva, on receiving the mandate from Thee by a movement of Thy creeper-like brows, blesses (i.e. manifests and restores) them into activity (as before in the previous cycle).

Notes: The theory of creation held by all Vedāntic sects, as also by Buddhists and Jains, is cyclic and evolutionary. There is no first creation and a final destruction. Creation is only a projection of the universe out of the state of involution in the first cause. These periods of manifestations and dissolutions are called Kalpa and Pralaya, each lasting for billions of human years. Generally in most cults the elements all dissolve in Prakrti and Prakṛti begins to evolve the categories that go to make up the universe. Here in this verse, which upholds the Śakti cult, Śakti seems to be differentiated from the Prakṛti, and made into the ultimate principle in the creative cycle. Prakṛti dissolves in Sadāśiva, who is distinguished from Rudra the destroyer.

The Devī is distinguished from Prakṛti as being the Supreme Power (Śakti), of whom Prakṛti can only be an effect. It is She who orders the creative process and Sadāśiva, who conserves all the seeds and tendencies of the previous creative cycle, only brings them into manifestation. Thus it is She and not He that fulfills the role that Prakṛti performs in other cults. Śakti is here made the all-in-all in the creative cycle. It has therefore been asserted in the very first verse of this text "United with Śakti, Śiva becomes endowed with the power to create the universe. Otherwise He is incapable of even movement." In philosophical terms we may say that the ultimate Reality is Being-Will. Without Will, Being is as good as non-existent. Will is in Being, but it is Will that makes Being significant. In fact Being and Will cannot be separated. Though one, they could be distinguished in thought, and in the Śakti cult Will is taken as all-important in the creative and redemptive processes. This universal Will is the Bhagavatī, the Divine Mother Tripurasundarī.

The conception of the Devi given in this and the previous verse militates against the theory of the equality of Śiva and Śakti maintained by the upholders of the Samaya doctrine. At least in places like this Saundaryalaharī goes against this theory and supports the Kaula school. Its leaning however is towards the Samaya doctrine on the whole.

25

This verse expresses the supremacy of the Devi over all other Deities.

त्रयाणां देवानां त्रिगुण-जनितानां तव शिवे

भवेत् पूजा पूजा तव चरणयो-र्या विरचिता ।

तथा हि त्वत्पादोद्वहन-मणिपीठस्य निकटे
स्थिता ह्येते शश्वन्मुकुलित-करोत्तंस-मकुटाः ॥ २५ ॥

Trayāṇām devānām tri-guṇa-janitānām tava Śive
bhavet pūjā pūjā tava caraṇayor yā viracitā;
tathā hi tvat-pādo'dvahana-maṇi-pīṭhasya nikate
sthitā hy'ete śaśvan mukulita-karottamsa-makuṭāḥ.

The worship done at Thy feet, O Consort of Śiva, is also the worship of all the three Deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, who have their origin in Thy three Guṇas (Rajas, Sattva and Tamas). They require no special worship, because they are ever waiting with their joined palms held above their diademed heads in salutation to Thee by the side of the foot-stool of diamonds that bear Thy feet.

26

The imperishable nature of Siva-Sakti is asserted.

विरिञ्चिः पञ्चत्वं व्रजति हरिराप्नोति विरतिं
विनाशं कीनाशो भजति धनदो याति निधनम् ।
वितन्द्री माहेन्द्री विततिरपि संमीलित-दृशा
महासंहारेऽस्मिन् विहरति सति त्वत्पति-रसौ ॥२६॥

Viriñciḥ pañcatvam vrajati harir āpnoti viratim
vināśam kīnāśo bhajati dhanado yāti nidhanam;
vitandrī māhendrī vitatir api sammīlita-dṛśā
mahā-saṃhāre 'smin viharati sati tvat-patir asau.

Viriñcīi (Brahmā) is reduced into elements: Hari (Viṣṇu) retires into passivity: Kīnāśa (Yama the god of death) himself dies; Kubera the god of wealth meets with his end; and Indra with all his followers closes his eyes in destruction. When such, O Sati (chaste Consort of Śiva), is the state of all beings at the time of the total dissolution (*mahāsamhāra*) of the universe, Thy husband Sadāśiva alone is sporting.

Notes: The poet-devotee addresses the Devi as Sati or Chaste Consort, implying that this indestructibility of Śadāśiva is due to the Devi's *pātivratya* (whole-hearted faithfulness to the husband), which according to Hindu belief, is supposed to generate great power in a woman. Here the poet fancies this belief is applicable even to Śiva-Śakti, the Divine Pair, too. The dominance of Śakti in the creative cycle seems to be asserted once again.

27

The attitude of devotees of high spiritual attainment (Jivan-muktas) is described in this verse:

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचना
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्य-क्रमण-मशनाद्याहुति-विधिः ।
प्रणामः संवेशः सुखमखिल-मात्मार्पण-दृशा
सपर्या-पर्याय-स्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम् ।। २७ ।।

Japo jalpaḥ śilpam sakalam api mudrā-viracanā
gatiḥ prādakṣiṇya-kramaṇam aśanādy'āhuti-vidhiḥ;
praṇāmaḥ samveśaḥ sukham akilam ātmārpaṇa-dṛśā
saparyā-paryāyas tava bhavatu yan me vilasitam.

May everything that I do with the sense of self-dedication (Ātmārpaṇa-dṛśā) be items in Thy service—my prattle, the utterance of Thy Mantra; the movements of my hand, the gestures and poses of Thy worship; my walking, Thy circumambulation; my eating, fire-sacrifice to Thee; the stretching of the body in sleep and rest, prostration to Thee; and all my enjoyments, offerings made to Thee.

Notes: Lakṣmīdhara specially warns in this connection that the acceptance of all ingredients of worship by the worshipper for himself is not what is meant here. It is rather their abandonment. Whatever enjoyments come to him in the course of life, he is not to accept them as for himself, but make an offering of them to Sadāśiva.

Further he remarks that this verse really refers to those Samayins who have become Jīvan-muktas (liberated in life) and yet remain in worldly life. They experience all activities of life as offerings to Devī. But for Samayins who are not in worldly life, worship consists only in practising the fourfold identification with the Devī in the Cittākāśa (sky of the mind). That is, they do not practise any worship of external symbol of Śiva-Śakti like the Śrī-Cakra engraved in metal, but practise only the meditative worship, which has no external rituals and ingredients, but consists only in the practice of the fourfold identification. (See Notes on verse 41 for more information on the fourfold identification).

Here it has to be pointed out that the drift of Lakṣmīdhara's warning and of his comments is to safeguard against the intrusion of the Kaula doctrine that all enjoyments that are had through the body-mind is an offering to Śiva-Śakti. It is Śiva-Śakti that has manifested in a real sense as the universe including all living beings in it. In this sense the body and mind of the Sādhaka too are Śiva-Śakti, they being a manifesta-

tion of the Divine pair. Lakṣmīdhara, who is a staunch critic and opponent of the Kaula system, does not want this verse to be taken as a justification of the latter's doctrine. So he points out that this verse has application only to Jīvanmuktas (liberated-in-life), who even after attaining to that state live as householders. It does not refer to Sādhakas and Yogeśvaras. For them the worship is to be done only in the Śrī-Cakra, which is identical with Sahasrāra and all the six lower Cakras, and if they are 'Yogeśvaras' their worship will be the practice of the fourfold identity which is described in detail in the comments under verse 41.

28

The supremacy of the Devi is again asserted.

सुधामप्यास्वाद्य प्रति-भय-जरामृत्यु-हरिणीं
विपद्यन्ते विश्वे विधि-शतमखाद्या दिविषदः।
करालं यत् क्ष्वेलं कबलितवतः कालकलना
न शम्भोस्तन्मूलं तव जननि ताटङ्क-महिमा ।। २८ ।।

Sudhām apy āsvādya pratibhaya-jarā-mṛtyu-hariṇīm
vipadyante viśve Vidhi-Śatamakhādyā diviṣadaḥ;
karālam yat kṣvelam kabalitavataḥ kāla-kalanā
na Śambhos tan-mūlam tava janani tāṭaṅka-mahimā.

Even after consuming Amṛta (nectar), which confers freedom from the fear-inspiring decrepitude **of old age and of death, Deities like** Brahmā **and Indra perish finally at the time of cosmic dissolution. But even in spite of taking the terrible poison of** Kālakūṭa, **Thy Consort** Śiva **enjoys a**

life-span that has no end. The cause of this, O Mother, is indeed the unique glory of Thy ear ornament!

Notes: This is a poetic fancy used for demonstrating the uniqueness of the Devī. In Hindu mythology Amṛta or immortal drink was produced when the Milk Ocean was churned by Devas and Asuras, and all the Devas partook of it and became immortal. Inspite of this the lives of all these Devas are bound to end at the time of cosmic dissolution. But in place of Amṛta, Śiva drank the poison of Kālakūṭa, which also had come out of the Milk Ocean at the time of its churning. But this dreadful poison, capable of burning up the whole universe, only remained as a blue mark, beautifying the fair throat of Śiva. Śiva thus not only did not perish at that time, but survives even the cosmic dissolution, as it is in Him that the whole universe with the Deities gets absorbed as stated in Verse 24. This eternal existence of Śiva is attributed to the power and glory of the Devi's ear-ornament constituted of eternal time symbolised by the sun and the moon. In the Hindu household practice, the ear-ornaments of a woman are removed when she becomes widowed. But the Devī's ear ornaments, namely endless Time, is represented by the sun and the moon, and She can thus never be widowed. As a requirement for this, Her Consort Śiva also has to be endowed with eternal existence.- She therefore is the cause of Śiva's eternity.

29

Through another poetic fancy, the supremacy of the Devī is revealed, while her modesty as an ideal wife is also conveyed.

किरीटं वैरिञ्चं परिहर पुरः कैटभभिदः
कठोरे कोटीरे स्खलसि जहि जंभारि-मकुटम् ।

प्रणम्रेष्वेतेषु प्रसभ-मुपयातस्य भवनं
भवस्याभ्युत्थाने तव परिजनोक्ति-र्विजयते ।। २९ ।।

Kirīṭam vairiñcam parihara puraḥ kaiṭabha bhidaḥ
kaṭhore koṭīre skhalasi jahi jambhāri-makuṭam;
praṇamreṣu'eteṣu prasabham upayātasya bhavanam
bhavasy'ābhyutthāne tava parijanoktir vijayate.

On Thy Consort Bhava approaching Thy abode unannounced, Thou springest up in such great haste to receive Him, whereupon Thy attendants (in their concern for thy safety from any possible injury) caution Thee, crying out, "Deign to keep away from the diadem of Viriñci (Brahmā); avoid tumbling over the heavy crown of Kaiṭabhārī (Viṣṇu); beware of the crest of Jambhāri (Indra)."

Notes: The great haste of the Devi in receiving Śiva indicates Her solicitude as an ideal wife, while Her utter unconcern for the prostrating Deities shows their insignificance before Her limitless glory.

30

The glory of the Divine Mother is further brought out by describing the greatness attained by one meditating on Her in identifiction.

स्वदेहोद्भूताभि-र्घृणिभि-रणिमाद्याभि-रभितो
निषेव्ये नित्ये त्वा-महमिति सदा भावयति यः ।
किमाश्चर्यं तस्य त्रिनयन-समृद्धिं तृणयतो
महासंवर्ताग्नि-र्विरचयति नीराजन-विधिम् ।। ३० ।।

Sva-deh'odbhūtābhir ghṛṇibhir aṇimādyābhir abhito
niṣevye nitye tvām aham iti sadā bhāvayati yaḥ;
kim-āścaryam tasya tri-nayana-samṛddhim tṛṇayato
mahā-saṃvartāgnir viracayati nīrājana-vidhim.

O Mother eternal and adored of all! By ever meditating with a feeling of identification with Thee, who art surrounded by divine powers like Animā which are only rays emanating from Thy feet, a devotee attains to glories far above even those of Śiva. What wonder then that even the conflagration of Cosmic Dissolution proves only to be the rite of Nīrājana to him.

Notes: Nīrājana is the ceremony of waving light before a Deity as a part of the service. It is otherwise called *Dīp'ā-rādhana*—adoration by waving light etc. Now the fire of Cosmic Dissolution, which consumes everything, is only a rite of this kind to the Devī, as also to a person who becomes established in a sense of identification with the Devī through meditation; for, it is so to the Divine Mother with whom he has become one. Besides, the conflagration of Cosmic Dissolution has adverse effect only on beings who are included in the Cosmos. But a true worshipper who has attained to identity with the Devī transcends all the cosmic processes, as he is one with the Devī, and so all cosmic processes become adoration to him as they are to the Devī.

31

The special glory of Saundaryalaharī and the special form of worship of the Mother inculcated in it are described in this verse.

चतुःषष्ट्या तन्त्रैः सकल-मतिसन्धाय भुवनं
स्थितस्तत्तत्-सिद्धि-प्रसव-परतन्त्रैः पशुपतिः ।
पुनस्त्व-न्निर्बन्धा-दखिल-पुरुषार्थैक-घटना-
स्वतन्त्रं ते तन्त्रं क्षितितल-मवातीतर-दिदम् ॥ ३१ ॥

Catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalam atisaṃdhāya bhuvanam
sthitas tat-tat-siddhi-prasava-para-tantraiḥ paśupatiḥ;
punas tvan-nirbandhād akhila-puruṣārth'aika ghaṭanā-
svatantram te tantram kṣiti-talam avātītarad idam.

Paśupati (Śiva) at first remained satisfied after 'deluding' (atisandhāya) the world, by giving out the sixty-four Tantras, which expound practices conferring only one or another of the various psychic powers and worldly fulfilments. Afterwards, on Thy special insistence, He revealed this Thy own Tantra to the world, independent of all the others and capable of conferring all the Puru-sārthas—Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa—on the votaries, by itself.

Notes: This verse has been the subject of very elaborate and conflicting commentaries by Lakṣmīdhara and other commentators, and they have raised issues regarding the value and validity of the majority of the religious literature known as the Tantras. The names of the sixty-four Tantras and their nature are briefly touched upon by Lakṣmīdhara. The purpose of all these Tantras is, according to him, the attainment of psychic powers, and most of them include rites of the Kapālikas and Digambaras, which are cruel and immoral in nature. They are therefore called Veda-bāhya—not included in Vedic tradition. This opinion, however, is

not accepted by another great authority on the Tantras, Bhāskararāya. According to Lakṣmīdhara, Śiva is said to have 'deluded' the world by giving out those sixty-four Tantras. 'Deluded' here means only that he gave through them the means for short-lived worldly fulfilments, which could only divert a man from the true end of human life, namely, Mokṣa or liberation from the bondage of Samsāra, the cycle of births and deaths. There are, however, aspirants of different competency. Several of them might care only for powers and for worldly ends. To meet the needs of such people only, these sixty four Tantras were given out by Śiva. Delusion consists in taking the pursuit of these ends as the purpose of those Tantras.

But because of the Devī's condescension for man, She insisted on Śiva to reveal this Tantra i.e. 'Thy Mantra' which is given in an indirect way in the next verse dealing with Śrī-Vidyā, which is the path of the Samayins and is capable of yielding all the Puruṣārthas, including Mokṣa.

There are three types of worship of the Devi according to the tradition of the Tāntrikas—Kaula, Miśra and Samaya. Kaula path, according to Lakṣmīdhara, is external worship of a type not approved by the Vedas. Kuṇḍalinī, according to Lakṣmīdhara, is sought to be roused in Mūlādhāra by the Kaulas and that is considered their end. This, however, is contradicted by authorities on the Kaula tradition like Arthur Avalon and others. Miśra or combined is the middle course, which adopts something of external worship and something of the Samaya or meditative adoration. For more information on the views of other schools, reference may be made to the Introduction. In the pure Samaya worship, the already roused up Kuṇḍalinī is raised to the Anāhata Cakra and there worshipped in the Śrī-Cakra in the heart-lotus with all ingredients mentally conceived in the

Cidākāśa or the spiritual sky. She is then led to unite with Śiva in the Sahasrāra. This meditative adoration leading the awakened Kuṇḍalinī to the Sahasrāra is the special Tantra referred to in this verse.

According to Lakṣmīdhara, the eligibility for the practice of the disciplines of the different types of Tantras is based on the aspirant's purity of mind, which to his all too orthodox outlook is determined by the birth of a person. Unfortunately he attributes this to Paśupati (Śiva) also. He maintains that these sixty-four Tantras, which he condemns as Vedabāhya (outside the pale of the Vedas), are meant for persons of low birth and the progeny of *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages. For the Traivarṇikas, that is, the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas he says there are the five Tantras known as Śubhāgama-pañcaka, which are purely Vedic and attributed to Vasiṣṭha, Sanaka, Śuka, Sanandana and Sanatkumāra. The discipline inculcated in them is pure Samayācāra, whereas the other sixtyfour. corrupted by Vāmācāra practices, are for the Kaulas, who necessarily must be persons born in the inferior castes. He also mentions a group of eight Tantras called *Candrakalāṣṭaka*—Candrakalā, Jyotsnāvatī, Kalānidhi, Kulārṇava, Kuleśvarī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bārhaspatya, and Durvāsamata. He maintains that both the three Varṇas and Śūdras have eligibility for the disciplines of these, but for the three Varṇas all the practices they inculcate are according to *Savyamārga* (proper path) while in respect of the paths for Śūdras and mixed castes, the texts give also practices which form *apasavyamārga* (improper path). According to some it is the teachings of these eight Tantras, which contain both Samaya and Kaula ways, that is called the Miśra or the mixed. The general understanding however is that the Tantra tradition does not make any distinctions based on birth, unlike the Vedic.

There is a modern view differing from that of old commentators on the meaning of this verse. The sixty-four Tantras referred to here are not the sixty-four Vāmācāra Tantras beginning with Mahāmāya and Śambara Tantras but what are known as the sixty-four Kalās or fine arts beginning with music and the rest, which are meant for giving man joys of the senses. They can all be called Tantras, as that word signifies only 'the means for attaining an end'. It is also to be noted that what is signified by the expression *idam tantram,* 'this Tantra', in this verse can be meaningful only if it refers to Saundaryalaharī as a whole and not to the Mantra given in the next verse. A Mantra in itself cannot be called a Text. So the reference as '*idam*' or 'this' is to Saundaryalaharī as a whole, which is a means for the attainment of Mukti (liberation), besides the desirable fulfilments of this world. It is only in this sense that Śiva is spoken of as 'deluding' the world, and not by revealing Texts inculcating the objectionable rites of the Kāpālikas.

According to Bhāskara Rāya, the expression *Idam tantram* refers to Vāmakeśvara Tantra.

32

'Idam tantram' (this Tantra) mentioned in the last verse is now given out in code words:

शिवः शक्तिः कामः क्षिति-रथ रविः शीतकिरणः
स्मरो हंसः शक्रस्तदनु च परा-मार-हरयः ।
अमी हृल्लेखाभि-स्तिसृभि-रवसानेषु घटिता
भजन्ते वर्णास्ते तव जननि नामावयवताम् ॥ ३२ ॥

Śivaḥ śaktiḥ kāmaḥ kṣitir atha raviḥ śītakiraṇaḥ
smaro hamsaḥ śakras tadanu ca parā-māra-harayaḥ;
amī hṛllekhābhis tisṛbhir avasāneṣu ghaṭitā
bhajante varṇās te tava janani nām'āvayavatām.

O Mother! The parts that combine to form Thy name (Mantra) are three groups of syllables—first, the group *Ka, e, i* and *la* indicated by the words Śiva. Śakti, Kāma and Kṣitī; second, the group *ha, sa, ka, ha* and *la* denoted by Ravi, Śītakiraṇa, Smara, Hamsa and Śakra; and third, the group *Sa, Ka,* and *la* denoted by Parā, Māra and Hari, together with Hṛllekhā (syllable Hrīm) added at the end of each of the three groups of syllables.

Notes: The Mantra of Tripurasundarī is what is revealed through these code words. It is in the tradition of Hindu sages to give Mantras only in an indirect form in texts. It will be got by arranging the three groups of above syllables one group after the other in order. The Mantra as given in the text has only fifteen letters and is therefore often called *Pañca-daśākṣarī* (fifteen lettered) Mantra. But Lakṣmīdhara points out that there is one more letter to be added to it, which has to be given by the Guru to the disciple privately, and is not therefore given in the Text.

The Mantra therefore is really Soḍaśākṣarī (sixteen lettered) according to him.

Lakṣmīdhara, however, states that anyone who desires to understand the full Mantra on reading his commentary is a disciple of his, and for the benefit of such persons, he gives in his commentary the last symbolic letter (*Srīm*) also to be added at the end of the last group given in the text in the *pañcadaśākṣari* form, thus giving it in its full form as *Ṣoḍa-*

śākṣari. As he did not consider it against tradition, we too are printing it.

This last syllable is what gives the name Śrī-Vidyā to this form of Upāsanā according to Lakṣmīdhara, and a commentary is incomplete unless it is also given. For the word Śrī-vidyā means the Vidyā having the syllable Srīm (Srī-bīja) as its seed or essence. These sixteen syllables stand for the sixteen parts (Kalas) of the Devi technically known as *ṣoḍaśa-nityas*. Of these the last or the sixteenth is called the Cit-Kalā, of which all the others are only aspects. So it transcends the other fifteen Kalas, and is not to be classed with them. It is Tripurasundarī Herself. It is also called Sādākhya-kalā.

Here it has to be remarked that there are differences of view about the Śrī-Vidyā Mantra as intrepreted above. It is held by several authorities that the fifteen lettered (*pañcadaśākṣarī*) Mantra in itself is Śrī-Vidyā. No additional Bījas like the Praṇava Om and even Śrīm are necessary. Om, according to this view, is the Praṇava of Brahmavidyā. Śrī-Vidyā has got its own Praṇavas, these being Hrīm, Srīm, Aim, Klīm and Sauḥ.

The interpretation of Lakṣmīdhara is considered to be Kādi-vidyā. There are two forms of Śrī-Vidyā, Kādi-Vidyā and Hādi-vidyā, among many forms of that Vidyā. The main, clear and understandable difference between them is this: In Kādi-vidyā the Mantra begins with the syllable '*ka*' while in Hādi-vidyā it begins with '*Ha*'. It is held by some that Kādi-vidyā leads to spiritual advancement and Hādi-vidyā to prosperity in this life and hereafter. These distinctions are not universally accepted by the followers of all schools of Śrī-Vidyā, as would be seen from a comparative study of the interpretations of the verses 32 and 33 by Lakṣmīdhara and another equally important authority Kaivalyāśrama.

According to the interpretation of Kaivalyāśrama, in the first Kūta or group of syllables of the Mantra, Śiva stands for *ha,* Śakti for *sa,* Kāma for *Ka,* and Kṣiti for *la.* In the other groups, the conversion is the same as that of Lakṣmīdhara, but he omits Srīm so essential for Lakṣmīdhara.

Thus, according to Kaivalyāśrama, the Mantra conveyed through this verse 32 is Hādividyā, while the next verse (33) he converts into Kādividyā. Further this Mantra of fifteen syllables given in the 32nd verse is also described by him as Lopamudrā Vidyā, the seed of all Mantras. It has three parts—the first called Vāgbhavakūta, the second Kāmarājakūta, and the third Śaktikūta. According to Arthur Avalon, "Here the Mantra of Ṣodaśi, which is the basis of the Samaya form of worship, is indicated." Ṣodaśi and Tripura-sundarī are thus identical.

33

The worship of the Devi, by those Samayins, who though worshipping inwardly, seek also the attainment of worldly prosperity, is now described, according to Laksmidhara.

स्मरं योनिं लक्ष्मीं त्रितय-मिद-मादौ तव मनो-
र्निधायैके नित्ये निरवधि-महाभोग-रसिकाः ।
भजन्ति त्वां चिन्तामणि-गुणनिबद्धाक्ष-वलयाः
शिवाग्नौ जुह्वन्तः सुरभिघृत-धाराहुति-शतैः ।। ३३ ।।

Smaram yonim lakṣmīm tritayam idam ādau tava manor
nidhāy'aike nitye niravadhi-mahā-bhoga-rasikāḥ;
bhajanti tvām cintāmaṇi-guṇa-nibaddh'ākṣa-valayāḥ
śivāgnau juhvantaḥ surabhi-ghṛta-dhārā'huti-śataiḥ.

Some connoisseurs of the highest Enjoyment (Mahābhogarasikāḥ), adding before the beginning of Thy Mantra (verse 32) the Bīja-syllables of Kāmarāja (Klīm), Bhuvaneśvarī (Hrīm), and Śri (Śrīm) and adorned with a necklace of Cintāmaṇi, worship Thee with oblations consisting of countless streams of Kāmadhenu's ghee in the purified fire of Śivā (i.e. Śakti established as the Trikona in the Anahata-cakra).

Notes: What was mentioned in the previous verse (32) is the Pañca-daśākṣarī-mantra or fifteen syllabled Mantra (which according to Lakṣmīdhara is really Sodaśākṣari or sixteen syllabled Mantra). It is here converted, according to Lakṣmīdhara, into Aṣṭa-daśākṣari or eighteen syllabled Mantra by adding before the beginning of its first group of syllables, the three Bīja syllables Klīm, Hrīm, and Srīm, given in this verse in the code words Smara, Yoni and Lakṣmī. It is used for internal worship by Mahābhoga-rasikas—a word which, according to Lakṣmīdhara, means those delighting in the highest forms of Bhogas or enjoyments here and hereafter. From this it will be seen that Lakṣmīdhara sees no Hādividyā here. But none the less his interpretation speaks of it as leading to worldly prosperity. For it is given for the benefit of such Samayins or internal worshippers as desire also great prosperity here and hereafter. They perform all the rites of external worship in the Cittākāsa or mental space. Repeating the Mantra, they establish the triangle (*trikoṇa*) with Bindu in the centre, in the lotus of Anāhata-cakra in the heart, and therein place the fire (*Agni*) of Svādhiṣṭhāna. The centres up to Svādhiṣṭhāna are spoken of as the region of Agni. By the meditative process, the Devi is to be brought down from the Bindu in the Sahasrāra to the Anāhata-cakra. The fire of Svadhiṣṭhāna,

brought to the Anāhata and lighted there, is Śivāgni (i.e. Śivā or Śakti in the form of fire), who is worshipped with countless oblations of the heavenly cow Kamadhenu's ghee. The Japa-mala worn on the neck of the worshipper is said to be made of Cintāmaṇi, the wish-yielding gems. All this is to be done thıough the meditative process.

The special significance of the verse is that worldly prosperity also can be attained by this mental worship, without resorting to the practices of what are called the sixty-four Tantras.

As in the previous verse, the interpretation of Kaivalyāśrama differs from that of Lakṣmīdhara, according to whose interpretation it is that we have made the English translation. Kaivalyāśrama, unlike Lakṣmīdhara, interprets here Smara as *Ka*, Yoni as *e* and Lakṣmi as *i* and substitues these in place of the above-given three syllables of the first part of the 32nd verse (as given by him), and reads it as beginning with *ka e i la* Hrīm, which is the first part of the Mantra in the verse 32 according to Lakṣmīdhara. Kaivalyāśrama, however, converts here the Hādividyā (as interpreted by him in the former Verse) into Kādividyā by this change. He also contends that though the expressions used in the verse like *Mahābhōgarasikāḥ* appear to indicate 'matchless worldy fulfilments', these fulfilments are really the highest spiritual fulfilments clothed in figurative language. Probably it gives both the fulfilments, fulfilling the prayers of both the types of aspirants. Kaivalyāśrama's view is supported by several other commentators too.

Anyway these different versions only show that there are different traditions of Śrī-Vidyā, and that the Mantra should be received from an authentic spirtual teacher representing any of the traditions. Then only it becomes a Mantra.

Learning from books is not of much use except that it gives one an intellectual understanding. Some commentators agree with Lakṣmīdhara and others with Kaivalyāśrama. Arthur Avalon adopts the interpretation of Kaivalyāśrama.

34

In order to show the difference between the conceptions of the Devī and Śiva entertained by the Samayins and the Kaulas. the position of the Kaulas is now stated in the verses 34 and 35. Afterwards in the six verses beginning with the 36th verse 'Tavājñā-cakrastham', the conception of the Samayins is elaborated. There are two schools of Kaulas known as Pūrva-Kaulas and Uttara Kaulas. First, the conception of Pūrva-Kaulas is given.

शरीरं त्वं शंभोः शशि-मिहिर-वक्षोरुह-युगं
तवात्मानं मन्ये भगवति नवात्मान-मनघम् ।
अतः शेषः शेषीत्यय-मुभय-साधारणतया
स्थितः संबन्धो वां समरस-परानन्द-परयोः ॥ ३४ ॥

Śarīraṃ tvam śambhoḥ śaśi-mihira-vakṣoruha-yugam
tav'ātmānam manye bhagavati nav'ātmānam anagham;
ataḥ śeṣaḥ śeṣīty ayam ubhaya-sādhāraṇatayā
sthitaḥ sambandho vāṃ samarasa-parānanda-parayoḥ.

'O Bhagavati! Thou art verily the body of Śambhu with the sun and the moon as the two breasts. And Thy being is verily the flawless Śambhu, having nine aspects (*navātman*). Therefore in the matter of relationship of Śeṣa (the accessory or the subservient factor) and Śeṣī (the

principal or essential entity), both (of ye) Parānanda (the *Ānanda-bhairava*) and Parā (the *Ānanda-bhairavī*) stand on an equal footing.

Notes: The body of Śambhu is Thyself and Thy being is Śambhu Himself. In reality both of you are therefore one. So there is no question of one of you being more important than the other as contemplated in the relationship of *Śeṣa* and *śeṣi* (the Accessory and the Principal). Both are of equal status or importance. This is the view of Pūrva-Kaulas. Śambu is called *Navātman* because He is characterised by nine *Vyuhas* or groups of manifestations—Kāla, Kula, Nāma, Jñāna, Citta, Nāda, Bindu, Kalā and Jīva. These mean respectively: time; colours; conventional names; knowledge undifferentiated and differentiated; mind with all its allied faculties like the intellect, senses etc., sound in its four forms Parā, Paśyantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī; the six Cakras beginning with Mūlādhāra; the fifty letters of the alphabet; and the enjoyer or the Jīva in each body. This attribute of being *Navātma* is common to you both.

The equality of status between Śiva and Śakti is explained thus by Pūrva-Kaulas: In the creative cycle when the cosmic manifestation takes place Śakti is the Śeṣi, the Principal Factor. Śakti (or the Parā) is then in the forefront, and Śiva (the *Paracit*) is only Śeṣa—Subsidiary or Accessory. When dissolution takes place, Śakti is in abeyance in Śiva, and Śiva thus becomes the Principal. Thus the relationship of Principal and Accessory are alternating between them in the two cosmic situations, and thus there is equality (*Samatva*) btween them.

The commonness (*ubhayasādhāraṇatā*) of the relation as Principal and Accessory of both Śakti and Śiva can be explained in another way also, without bringing in the distinction between the two schools of Kaulas. The Devī is the form of

Śiva, and Śiva is the being of the Devī. So if there is a difference between them, it is a distinction without a difference and therefore what is applicable to the one is applicable to the other also. Both are therefore Principal and Accessory, or there is no such distinction in fact between them. In the interpreation first given, the distinction of Principal and Accessory is there, but their commonness (*ubhayasādhāraṇatā*) consists in that it alternates between Śakti and Śiva in the two states of creation and dissolution. The first is the explanation of Lakṣmīdhara, while the second is that of some others who do not see in the verses the distinction between the two schools of Kaulas.

35

The conception of the Devi obtaining among Uttara-Kaulas is stated in this verse:

मनस्त्वं व्योम त्वं मरुदसि मरुत्सारथि-रसि
त्वमाप-स्त्वं भूमि-स्त्वयि परिणतायां न हि परम् ।
त्वमेव स्वात्मानं परिणमयितुं विश्व-वपुषा
चिदानन्दाकारं शिवयुवति-भावेन बिभृषे ।। ३५ ।।

Manas tvam vyoma tvam marud asi marut sārathir asi
tvam āpas tvam bhūmis tvayi pariṇatāyām na hi param;
tvam eva svātmānam pariṇamayitum viśva-vapuṣā
cidānand'ākāram Śiva-yuvati-bhāvena bibhṛṣe.

Thou art the Mind, Thou art Ākāśa; Thou art also Fire. Thou art Water and Earth too. When Thou hast transformed Thyself in this way into the form of the universe, there is nothing beyond not included in Thee.

It is to transform Thyself into the universe that Thou assumest this form of Consciousness-Bliss as Siva's Consort (His Śakti).

Notes: The universe in its subtle and gross forms is described here as the transformation of Śakti. Though undergoing actual transformation into all these elements in their gross macro-cosmic aspect as the universe and in their subtle micro-cosmic aspect as the six *cakras* in the body, She is not lost in the effects unlike milk when it becomes curd, but retains Her identity as the Supreme Will, Śakti, described here as Consciousness-Bliss. This seems to be the implication of the expression *Cidānand'ākara* in the Text while at the same time describing Her transformation as the Universe.

According to some, the expression Śiva-yuvati (Consort of Śiva) is only a word of address, and should be put at the beginning of the prose order of the verse. But when it is combined with 'bhāva' and interpreted as 'in the form or aspect' of Śiva's Consort, the expression seems to get a special significance. In the pre-creation state of Pralaya, Śiva and Śakti form the Alogical Whole. But when the creative Cycle begins, the differentiation of the Subject and Object (Prakāśa and Vimarśa) arises through the threefold stresses of Nāda, Bindu and Kalā. It is the Vimarśa (Reflector) that generates the Self-awareness as the 'I' in the Prakāśa (Pure Consciousness). This Vimarśa Śakti is what is called here Śiva-yuvati (Consort of Śiva) and in Verse 6 as *Pura-ripur āho-puruṣikā* (what gives the 'I sense' or 'self-awareness' to Śiva). This differentiation of the Alogical Subject-objectless Whole into the Subject and the Object includes the assumption of the role of Śiva-Yuvati (Consort of Śiva), having as its sole purpose the evolution into the various categoris that constitute the universe. All the categories are referred to through implica-

tion by mentioning the Mind and the gross elements of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. It is also hereby implied that the six Cakras in the individual body are formed of these six categories mentioned, and so they are present in those Cakras. The categories, however, are twenty five—the five gross Elements, the five Tanmātras (subtle state of Elements), the five organs of action and the five organs of knowledge, besides the five pure categories of Mind, Māyā, Īśvara, Śuddha-Vidyā and Sadāśiva. Not included in these, but forming their source is the 26th, the First Cause, which is the Super-category known as Chit-Kalā or Sādākhya, the union of Śadāśiva with Śuddha-Vidyā. The Sādākhya is Tripurasundarī, the goddess of the three stresses of Nāda, Bindu and Kalā. She is the Śiva-Yuvati mentioned in the verse. According to Arthur Avalon this Śakti in the creative aspect is called the Mahā-Tripurasundarī and in the destructive aspect as Mahā-Kālī

According to Lakṣmīdhara, the special significance of this verse is to show the view of Uttara-Kaulas regarding Śakti in contrast to that of the Pūrva-Kaulas described in the previous verse. While the Pūrva-Kaulas deny only an exclusive relationship of Śeṣa (Accessory) and Śeṣi (Principal) between Śakti and Śiva but accept such realtion in alternate periods of manifestation and dissolution in the creative cycle, the Uttara-Kaulas maintain that Śakti is absolutely dominant in the creative period of the cycle, and no quetion of mutual relationship arises. In creation Śiva is absolutely withdrawn in Śakti, and becomes a mere implication. This is what is meant by saying "When Thou (Śakti) hast manifested into the form of the universe, there is nothing beyond not included in Thee." Śakti alone counts in creation and needs to be worshipped. According to Lakṣmīdhara, the Uttara-Kaulas woship only the sleeping Śakti as the Kuṇḍalinī in the Mūlādhāra with rites

peculiar to them, and if She is awakened, it is Mukti according to them, and they have no idea of raising her to Śiva in the Sahasrāra. This view of Lakṣmīdhara is strongly opposed by Arthur Avalon. For details see Introduction.

36

In the following six verses, the adoration of the Devi by the Samayins, who have been able to rouse the Kuṇḍalinī and raise her to the higher levels of the six Cakras, is described. The arrangement of the verses in the Text as given here is in the descending order i.e. from the subtle to the gross, and starts therefore from Ājñā-Cakra at the level of the brows to Muladhara. This arrangement is rather unusual, if it relates to meditation for raising the Kundalini to Sahasrāra in the internal worship of Śakti. For, meditation proceeds from the gross to the subtle generally. The textual arrangement is relevant only if the object is to bring the Kuṇḍalini down to the Mūladhāra which is very improbable. These six verses are therefore arranged in the reverse order in Arthur Avalon's edition. In justification of the usual textual arrangement, it is said by Laksmīdhara that the arrangement is according to the evolutionary order of the constituent categories of the Cakras (Sṛṣṭi-Krama). In that case the subtler is supposed to precede the grosser. Mind. Ākāśa, Air, Fire, Water, Earth—this is the order of evolution from the subtle to the gross. So the Cakras are mentioned in the order of the Element forming their sources. Even here there is an anomaly in the case of Svādhiṣṭhāna and Maṇipūra an explanation for which is given in the Introduction to Verse 39.

तवाज्ञाचक्रस्थं तपन-शशि-कोटि-द्युतिधरं
परं शंभुं वन्दे परिमिलित-पार्श्वं परचिता ।

यमाराध्यन् भक्त्या रवि-शशि-शुचीना-मविषये
निरालोकेऽलोके निवसति हि भालोक-भुवने ।। ३६ ।।

Tavājñā-cakrastham tapana-śaśi-koṭi-dyutidharam
param śambhum vande parimilita-pārśvam paracitā;
yam ārādhyan bhaktyā ravi-śaśi-śucīnām aviṣaye
nirāloke'loke nivasati hi bhā-loka-bhuvane.

I salute the Supreme Śambhu residing in Thy Ājñā-Cakra, who is resplendent as crores of suns and moons put together, and whose (left) side is integrated with the Supreme Consciousness embodied as the Devi. He who adores Him with deep devotion attains that Self-Conscious and Self-luminous State which is not a Loka (Region or Plane), which transcends the pale of the light of Moon, Sun and Fire, and which is beyond the ken of all.

Notes: The experience of the Sādhaka of the Samaya type, who has been able to rouse the Kuṇḍalinī and raise Her through the various lower Cakras to the sixth known as the Ājñā-cakra at the level of the brow, is described here. There is a dispute whether the expression '*Tav'ājña-cakra*' (in Thy Ājñā-cakra) means the two-petalled lotus at the Ājñā-cakra of the Sādhaka, or to the four Śivakoṇas of the Śrī-Cakra conceived at the level of the Ājñā-cakra of the Sādhaka. Lakṣmīdhara takes the latter view. Such a person easily attains the Thousand Petalled Lotus at the level of the middle brain. It is called '*bhāloka* or *jyotirmaṇḍala*'—the Luminous Region. It is spoken of as outside the pale of moon, sun and fire, because these illumine only the Ajña, Anāhata and Svāhdiṣṭhāna respectively. The Moon in the thousand-petalled lotus is different. Unlike the material

moon, it is partless (*niṣkalā*); it is the eternal spiritual light of Bliss-Consciousness. The Deities adored in Ajñā-cakra are known as Para-śambhu-nātha and Cit-parāmbā.

37

The meditation of Samayins in Visuddhi-cakra at the level of the throat is now described:

विशुद्धौ ते शुद्धस्फटिक-विशदं व्योमजनकं
शिवं सेवे देवीमपि शिवसमान-व्यवसिताम् ।
ययोः कान्त्या यान्त्याः शशिकिरण-सारूप्यसरणेः
विधूतान्त-र्ध्वान्ता विलसति चकोरीव जगती ।।३७।।

Viśuddhau te śuddha-sphaṭika-viśadam vyoma janakam
śivam seve devīm api Śiva-samāna-vyavasitām;
yayoḥ kāntyā yāntyāḥ śaśikiraṇa-sārūpya-saraṇeḥ
vidhūt'āntar-dhvāntā vilasati cakorī'va jagatī.

In Thy Viśuddhi-**cakra I meditate on Śiva, the creator of** Ākāśa **(Vyoman), resembling a pure crystal in purity, along with the Devī who is equal to** Śiva **in all respects. In the Lunar Brilliance proceeding from them both, the whole universe, free from the Darkness of Ignorance, rejoices like the bird** Cakorī **(female partridge).**

Notes: In Sanskrit poetry the bird Cakora is conceived as delighting in moonlight and consuming that light. When the Kuṇḍalinī rests in the Viśuddhi-cakra, the darkness of ignorance is removed from the heart of the devotee, and along with that, there is the upsurge of the Light of Consciousness

and Bliss. The expression 'whole universe' is brought into the scope of this illumation to show that it is not a mere subjective experience. The whole universe becomes to the aspirant the Light of Consciousness. The Deities adored here are called Vyome'śvara and Vyom'eśvarī. Some consider the Deity to be Ardha-nārīśvara or Sadāśiva.

38

In this verse the Samayin's adoration of Śiva-Śakti in the Anāhata-cakra at the level of the chest is described.

समुन्मीलत् संवित्कमल-मकरन्दैक-रसिकं
भजे हंसद्वन्द्वं किमपि महतां मानसचरम् ।
यदालापा-दष्टादश-गुणित-विद्यापरिणति-
र्यदादत्ते दोषाद् गुण-मखिल-मद्भ्यः पय इव ।। ३८ ।।

Samunmīlat-samvit-kamala-makarandaika rasikam
bhaje hamsa-dvandvam kim api mahatām mānasa-caram;
Yad ālāpād aṣṭādaśa-guṇita-vidyā pariṇatir
yad ādatte doṣād guṇam akhilam adbhyaḥ paya iva.

O Mother! I adore the pair of Swans (Śiva-Śakti) who take delight in imbibing the honey of the full-blown Lotus of Knowledge of the Anāhata-cakra, and who swim in the Mānasa lake of the mind of enlightened ones. Their mutual conversation is what has become the eighteen Vidyas, and they separate good from evil, as milk from the water with which it is diluted (as swans do).

Notes: This verse implies that when Kuṇḍalinī is at the level of Anāhata-cakra, the aspirant gains mastery of the

eighteen disciplines of learning like Sikṣa, Kalpa, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Jyotiṣa, Chandas, Ṛg, Yajus, Sāman, Atharvaṇ, Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāmsas, Nyāya, Purāṇa, Dharma-śāstra, Āyurveda, Dhanurveda, Gāndharva-Veda and Nīti-śāstra. Only virtues, to the exception of vices, shine in him. There is a pun on the expressions *Mānasa-saras* and 'separation of milk from water.' The Mānasa lake is famous in Sanskrit tradition as the abode of a superior type of swans, and these swans are supposed to have the power of separating milk mixed with water. 'Śiva-Śakti meditated upon here is known as Hams'eśvara and Hams'eśvarī.

39

The worship of Śiva-Śakti in the Svadhisthana-cakra is here described. In the order of the Cakras from Ājñā dowards, it is Maṇipūra as represented by the Water Element, and not Svādhiṣṭhāna represented by Fire Element, that should come here. Probably the author follows a different tradition from the usual. Or it is put in this order, because the Fire of Rudra's anger (established in Svādhiṣṭhāna) should first destroy the world before the Mother's look 'as the rain of Mercy' (represented by Maṇipūra) should revive it.

तव स्वाधिष्ठाने हुतवह-मधिष्ठाय निरतं
तमीडे संवर्तं जननि महतीं तां च समयाम् ।
यदालोके लोकान् दहति महति क्रोध-कलिते
दयार्द्रा या दृष्टिः शिशिर-मुपचारं रचयति ।। ३९ ।।

Tava svādhiṣṭhāne hutavaham adhiṣṭhāya niratam
tam īḍe Samvartam janani mahatīm tām ca samayām;

yad āloke lokān dahati mahati krodha-kalite
dayārdrā yad-dṛṣṭiḥ śiśiram upacāraṃ racayati

O Mother! Invoking Samvarta (Kālāgni-Rudra), the lord of the Fire of Dissolution in the Fire Element of Thy Svadhisthana-cakra, I adore Him along with Thee, Samaya, the great Potency (Maha-Sakti) of Rudra. When the angry looks of Rudra burn up the universe, it is Thy merciful look that bestows on them the reviving blessing of coolness.

Notes: The Svādhisṭhana-cakra is constituted of the Fire Element. There the aspirant invokes Kālā'gni-Rudra, the Lord of Cosmic Destruction, who is called in the Text as Samvarta, and side by side with Him the Divine Mother, who is called Samayā, i.e. one Samā or equal to Rudra. While the flames of the angry looks of Rudra's power destroy the universe, it is the merciful looks of the Mother that perform the reverse process of reviving them by the gracious and cooling effect of that glance. The Deities meditated upon are called Samvart'eśvara, and the Śakti, Samay'āmbā.

40

In this verse the description of Siva-Sakti in Manipura-cakra is given:

तटित्वन्तं शक्त्या तिमिर-परिपन्थि-स्फुरणया
स्फुर-न्नानारत्नाभरण-परिणद्धेन्द्र-धनुषम् ।
तव श्यामं मेघं कमपि मणिपूरैक-शरणं
निषेवे वर्षन्तं हरमिहिर-तप्तं त्रिभुवनम् ॥ ४० ॥

Taṭitvantam śaktyā timira-paripanthi-sphuraṇayā
sphuran-nānā-ratn'ābharaṇa-pariṇaddhendra dhanuṣam;
tava śyāmam megham kam api maṇipūr'aika śaraṇam
niṣeve varṣantam Hara-mihira-taptam tribhuvanam.

I worship that unique dark-blue Rain Cloud which abides ever in the Manipura sending showers on the universe that has been burnt by the sun of Rudra—the Rain-cloud that is illumined by the brilliant lightning in the form of Śakti, and revealing the rain-bow made by the reflection of the numerous sparkling gems (set in the Kuṇḍalinī), and dispelling the darkness reigning in the Maṇipūra.

Notes: In the previous verse it was said that the universe, burnt by the angry looks of Rudra, is cooled by the merciful glances of the Divine Mother. The same idea is repeated in this verse relating to meditation in the Maṇipūra. The centres from Maṇipūra down are regions of darkness. So the Śiva-Śakti is said to illumine it, as lightning associated with the rain-cloud does the sky and the land on a dark night. The rain-cloud is Śiva-Śakti, and the lightning illumining it along with the cooling rain is from Śakti, the Divine Mother. The Deity meditated upon is called Mahe'ś vara and the Śakti, Saudāminī.

41

The meditation of the Samayins in the Muladhara is now described.

तवाधारे मूले सह समयया लास्यपरया
नवात्मानं मन्ये नवरस-महाताण्डव-नटम् ।

उभाभ्या-मेताभ्यां-मुदय-विधि-मुद्दिश्य दयया
सनाथाभ्यां जज्ञे जनकजननीमत् जगदिदम् ।। ४१ ।।

Tavādhāre mūle saha samayayā lāsya-parayā
navātmānam manye nava-rasa-mahā-tāṇḍava-naṭam;
ubhābhyām etābhyām udaya-vidhim uddiśya dayayā
sanāthābhyām jajñe janaka-jananīmat jagad idam

In Thy Mūlādhāra-cakra, I meditate on the Navātman (Mahā-bhairava), who, expressing nine sentiments, is engaged in the Mahā-tāṇḍava dance in the company of Samayā (Mahā-bhairavī) who is dancing the Lāsya type of dance. The universe has come to have a father and a mother in ye both, who have come together graciously for its regeneration (after its being burnt up).

Notes: The Deity meditated on here is Ādinātha, and the Sakti, Lāsy'eśvari. Śiva, the Ādinātha, is said to perform the Tāṇḍava or masculine type of dance, and the Devi, the Lāsya or feminine type of dance. The worlds that have at the end of the cycle been dissolved into their elements and absorbed in Śiva-Śakti are again revived when Śiva and Śakti begin their dance. When they stop the dance, dissolution takes place. So, for the fruition of the Karmas of countless Jīvas, and their gradually becoming fit for Mokṣa, Śiva-Śakti commences the above described dance, during which the universe gradually evolves. Thus the universe comes to have a progenitor (Father-Mother) in Śiva-Śakti who start their dance.

The word used for the Devi in the text is Samayā and for Śiva, Navātman. Śiva is also called Samaya but here denoted by the word Navātman for the reason stated at the

end of these comments. The word Samaya-mata or Samayācāra is derived from this name of Śiva and Śakti. Sama means equal or similar and both are called by that same name in its masculine and feminine forms as Samaya and Samayā. The equal importance and similarity of both Śiva and Śakti is the special feature of Samayācāra. The equality between them both is in the following respects: Adhiṣṭhāna (basis or abode) Avasthāna (condition) Anuṣṭhāna (occupation) Rūpa (form) and Nāma (name). Similarities in all these respects are reflected in the meditation on Śiva and Śakti in all the six Cakras given in verses 36 to 42.

Śiva is called Navātman here, because he is characterised by nine Vyūhas or groups of manifestations. They are *Kāla* (Time with sun and moon signifying it); Kula (colours); Nāma (names like Samaya and Samayā); Jñāna (knowledge); Chitta (mind with all its faculties like intellect, senses etc.); Nāda (sound in its four forms of Parā, Paśyanti, Madhyamā, and Vaikharī); Bindu (the six Cakras begining with Mūlādhāra), Kalā (the fifty letters of the alphabet) and Jīva (the individual being who is the enjoyer in each body). There is equality between Śiva and Śakti in both the above respects—the five former and the nine latter.

In this connection commentators draw our attention to the fact that for Devi the word Samayā, which is used by Samayācārins, is used, while for Śiva the word Navātman, which is a term of Kaulas for Śiva, is used. This is done to indicate that the Kaula's Śiva-Śakti of the Mūlādhāra, whom they also call Ānanda-Bhairvava and Ānanda Bhairvai, are the same as the Samaya and Samayā of Samayācārins.

It is accepted by all schools of thought that in creation, Prakṛti or Śakti is the active factor. All Jīvas involved in Samsāra therefore come under Her sway; and Her worship

and the attainment of Her grace are therefore necessary for all Jīvas to attain salvation. The worship of Śakti, according to the nature and competency of aspirants, is divided into three types—the Samaya, the Kaula and the Miśra. Samaya worship is pure internal worship without any external rituals or ingredients, and is performed in the Hṛdayākāśā (the spiritual sky, as contrasted with the Mahākāśa or the external space). Hṛday'ākāśa, otherwise called the Dahara, is the subtle dimension into which a Yogi, who has gained absolute control over the movements of his body and mind, enters. In such an aspirant, the Kuṇḍalinī, awakened by the meditative process and the grace of the Guru (technically called Śāmbhava mahāvedha), rises from the Mūlādhāra, through the Swādhiṣṭhāna to Maṇipūra, where the Devi is worshipped with various ingredients, not material but of the subtle dimension of Cittākāśa. She is then led to the Viśuddhi-cakra, where also She is to be adored. Then She is led to the Ajña-cakra, where further items of worship are offered to Her. She then quickly enters into the Thousand-petalled Lotus of the Sahasrāra, generating infinite bliss in the aspirant. The mental adoration of the Śiva-Śakti in the Thousand-Petalled lotus of Sahasrāra, which is considered identical with the Śrī-Cakra, is the form that the worship of the Samayins take. The adoration of the Devi in the different Cakras is not essential for them. For, all the Cakras are included in Śrī-Cakra.

This internal worship is called Samaya, and Śiva and the Devi are called Samaya and Samayā respectively, because they have five forms of Sāmyatā or similarity. These are—Adhiṣṭhāna-sāmya (similarity of basis), Avasthānasāmya (similarity of condition), Anuṣṭhānasāmya (similarity of occupation) Rūpa-sāmya (similarity of form) and Nāma-sāmya (similarity of names like Navātman, Samaya etc.). It is

because of this Samatva or similarity, implying also the equality of status of Śiva-Śakti in the school, that it is called Samaya form of worship.

Pure internal worship can be done only by highly advanced Sādhakas. The worship done by those who cannot attain to this high level is called Miśra or a mixture of internal and external worship. They do internal worship through meditation according to their capacity, and worship the Devi in the Śrī-Cakra designed on Bhūrja-patra, silk or metal sheet making offerings of various items of worship. This is the common form of worship prevalent among those who call themselves Samayins, the pure mental worship being confined to advanced Sādhakas. This kind of worship can probably be called Miśra or mixed. Commentators are not clear on what Miśra form of worship is. According to some authorities the Miśra is the name for the discipline taught in the eight Tantras known as *Chandra-kalāṣṭaka,* which deals with Śrī-Vidyā but contains systems of disciplines that are of the nature of pure Samayācāra and also of the Kaulas for two types or classes of aspirants. So the Vidyā contained in them is called mixed or Miśra. Pure Samayācāra is laid down in the Śubhāgama-pañcaka. See Notes on Verse 21.

Śrī-Cakra is conceived by these worshippers not as a mere design, but as the very manifestation of Śiva-Śakti in Their abode, wherein Their devotees can adore them. Śrī-Cakra is described by texts as *Sivayor vapuḥ*—the very body of Śiva and Śakti. It represents also the manifestation of Śiva-Śakti as Brahmāṇḍa (manifested universe as a whole) and as Piṇḍāṇḍa (individuals). Therefore the Sahasrāra and all the six Cakras are included in the Śrī-cakra, and its adoration is conceived as equal to the adoration of Śiva-Śakti in all Cakras including the Sahasrāra. But in pure Samaya worship there is no need of any such external symbol, as

the worshipper is able to ascend into the higher dimension of Chittākāsa, and adore Śakti in the Cakras and unite Her with Śiva in the Sahasrāra.

According to Lakṣmīdhara the most important part of the Samayin's adoration consists in realizing the four kinds of identities. First there is the identity of the six Cakras beginning with the Mūlādhāra of the worshipper with the six Koṇas (angles) of the Śrī-Cakra beginning with the Trikoṇa. Second identity is between the quadrilateral in which the Bindu is located in the Śrī-cakra of the Samayins, with the middle of the thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrāra). The third one is the identity between the Bindu and Śiva. The fourth one is the identity of the totality of the Śrī-Cakra with the fifteen letters of the Pañcadaśākṣarī Mantra or Tripurasundarī standing for her fifteen Kalas. Beyond them, the twenty-five evolutionary categories, is the Sādākhya Kalā, known also as Śrī-Vidyā, Cit-Kalā and Brahma-Vidyā. It is also described as Sadā-śiva in union with Śuddha-Vidyā. She is Mahā-Tripurasundarī the twenty-sixth transcendent category, the Super-Kalā, who though transcendent, embodies as the three creative stresses known as Nāda, Bindu and Kalā. She, being the mistress of the three Kalās, is called Tripurasundarī.

It is said that by this practice of meditation on these identities the aspirant's mind gets absorbed in Sādākhya Kalā. Then by the grace of the Guru, technically known as Śaiva-mahāvedha, the aspirant's Kuṇḍalinī, which has been asleep in the Mūlādhāra, immediately rises to the level of Maṇipūra. There the aspirant performs Her worship in the Dahara (the spiritual sky) and leads Her through the Anāhata and Viśuddhi Cakras to the Ajña-cakra, where She appears as a streak of Lightning and immediately unites with Śiva in the Sahasrāra. This results in infinite bliss in the body-mind of the aspirant. As the Kuṇḍalinī rises, the body becomes

cold, and when it reaches the Sahasrāra, his individual consciousness is absorbed in the unitary consciousness of Samādhi.

This is the real worship of the Samayins and there is no external ritual in this. But this advanced state is reached only by long practice of external worship of the Śrī-Cakra and the Japa (repetition) of the Mantra received from a Guru. All those who call themselves Samay'ācārins now-a-days are only at this stage. If Samayācāra really means the internal adoration of the Devi, as all authoritative texts say, it is a misnomer to apply that term to such practitioners.

Apart from the pure Samayins and the mixed type, there are the pure external worshippers, the Kaulas. The word 'Kaula' comes from Kula, applied to the Suṣumna path. This is the interpretation of Lakṣmīdhara. For an alternative interpretation of the word and the philosophy of Kaulas, see Introduction. Kuṇḍalinī sleeping at the base of the Suṣumnā at the Mūlādhāra is the object of adoration of the Kaulas. If they are able to rouse that Kuṇḍalinī by their rituals, they are supposed to attain Mukti. Among the Kaulas there are two schools—Pūrva Kaulas and Uttara Kaulas. Though both are external worshippers of the Devi in the Muladhara, there are considerable differences in their philosophy and rituals. Pūrva Kaulas pay equal importance to Śiva and Śakti. In Sṛṣti (manifested state), Śakti is supreme and Śiva is in abeyance. In the state of Pralaya or Cosmic dissolution, when there is no creative activity, Śiva is supreme, and Śakti is in abeyance. Thus the importance of the two elements alternate, and in that sense it is equal to both. But the Uttara Kaulas eliminate Śiva Tattva altogether, as being only an implication involved in Śakti, who is the sole object of worship. For them there is no Śiva apart from Śakti. But while the Pūrva Kaulas offer worship on the

Trikoṇa (triangle) designed on some material substance, the Uttara Kaulas have the human body as the highet symbol for adoration. Samayācārins consider their rituals as Avaidika (not justified by the Vedas) and a degeneration that has come in the course of ages. Followers of the Kaula tradition have differences from these views which are found in Lakṣmīdhara's commentatary on the Saundaryalaharī in the light of the Samaya traditions. In the Saundaryalaharī itself there is an implication of the Kaula doctrine too regarding the dominance of Śakti in verse 23 and others quoted in the Introduction. Arthur Avalon, who had done more work than any other for expounding the Tantras, strongly differs from the view of Lakṣmīdhara expressed above about the Kaulas.

42

In the foregoing 41 verses the philosophy and ways of worship of the Samayins, that is, those who are devoted to the internal worship of Sakti in the Sahasrāra and the Cakras, as also of those, who, being incapable of pure meditative adoration, perform the worship in Sri-Cakra drawn on an external medium, which the Samayins consider through faith as the Sahasrāra itself including the six Cakras too. Now, in the remaining 59 verses out of a total of one hundred, the poet-devotee describes the enthralling forms of Mother Tripurasundarī, part by part from head to feet, for enhancing the devotional fervour of those who cannot realise Her in the heart. First the Devi's crown is described in the 42nd verse.

गतै-र्माणिक्यत्वं गगनमणिभिः सान्द्रघटितं
किरीटं ते हैमं हिमगिरिसुते कीर्तयति यः ।

स नीडेयच्छाया-च्छुरण-शबलं चन्द्र-शकलं
धनुः शौनासीरं किमिति न निबध्नाति धिषणाम् ॥४२

Gatair māṇikyatvam gagana-maṇibhiḥ-sāndraghaṭitam.
kirīṭam te haimam himagiri-sute kīrtayati yaḥ;
sa nīḍeya-cchāyā-cchuraṇa-śabalam candra-śakalam
dhanuḥ śaunāsīram kim iti na nibadhnāti dhiṣaṇām.

O Daughter of the Snow-capped Mountain! A poet who describes the golden crown on Thy head, set densely with precious gems (māṇikya) constituted of the twelve suns—will he not have the impression that the **crescent moon on Thy head is Indra's bow (rainbow), on seeing the variegated hues it reflects from the diffused light of the surrounding luminous bodies falling on it.**

Notes: In the metaphor, which describes all the luminous bodies in the sky as gems studded on the Devi's crown and the crescent moon on Her head as rainbow, we get a fine example of combining Nature poetry with the devotional sentiment, so as to make the latter more effective and appealing. Besides, it implies that the Devi hymned here is not a mere anthropomorphic Deity, but the mistress of the whole universe, to whom all Nature is an embellishment.

43

The locks of the Devi are now glorified

धुनोतु ध्वान्तं न-स्तुलित-दलितेन्दीवर-वनं
घनस्निग्ध-श्लक्ष्णं चिकुर-निकुरुंबं तव शिवे ।

यदीयं सौरभ्यं सहज-मुपलब्धुं सुमनसो
वसन्त्यस्मिन् मन्ये वलमथन-वाटी-विटपिनाम् ॥५३॥

Dhunotu dhvāntam nas tulita-dalit'endīvara-vanam
ghana-snigdha-ślakṣṇam cikura-nikurumbam tava Śive;
yadīyam saurabhyam sahajam upalabdhum sumanaso
vasanty asmin manye vala-mathana-vāṭī-viṭapinām.

O Consort of Śiva! May Thy braid of locks resembling a forest of full-blown blue lotus flowers, luxuriant, soft and oily, remove the darkness of ignorance in our hearts. I presume that the heavenly flowers of Indra's garden have taken a place in Thy locks to imbibe a little of the natural fragrance of those locks (and not to add fragrance to the locks like flowers ordinarily worn by women.)

Notes: As shown in the earlier verse, the poet-devotee takes care to see that while he is describing an ideal beauty, the object of his praise is the Cosmic Person conceived as Woman for whom all Nature is a decoration. Here the object with which Indian women adore their locks with fragrant flowers like jasmine is reversed. Even the heavenly flowers of the Kalpaka tree are abiding in the Devi's locks only to enhance their own famous fragrance by the still superior fragrance natural to Her locks.

44

The parting line of the Devi's locks is now described:

तनोतु क्षेमं न-स्तव-वदनसौन्दर्यलहरी
परीवाहस्त्रोतः-सरणिरिव सीमन्तसरणिः ।

वहन्ती सिन्दूरं प्रबलकबरी-भार-तिमिर-
द्विषां बृन्दै-र्बन्दीकृतमिव नवीनार्क-किरणम् ।। ४४ ।।

Tanotu kṣemam nas tava vadana-saundarya laharī
parīvāha-srotaḥ-saraṇir iva sīmanta-saraṇiḥ.
vahantī sindūram prabala-kabarī-bhāra-timira-
dviṣām vṛndair bandī-kṛtam iva navīn'ārka kiranam;

May we be blessed ever more by the parting middle line of Thy hair, which appears to be a canal for carrying the overflowing flood of beauty of Thy face. The streak of vermilion adorning that line looks like the rays of the rising sun entrapped by the opposing enemy hordes of darkness constituted of Thy hair hemming it on both sides.

45

The beauty of the Devi's face is now described.

अरालैः स्वाभाव्या-दलिकलभ-सश्रीभि-रलकैः
परीतं ते वक्त्रं परिहसति पङ्केरुहरुचिम् ।
दरस्मेरे यस्मिन् दशनरुचि-किञ्जल्क-रुचिरे
सुगन्धौ माद्यन्ति स्मरदहन-चक्षु-र्मधुलिहः ।। ४५ ।।

Arālaiḥ svābhāvyād alikalabha-saśrībhir alakaiḥ
parītam te vaktram parihasati paṅkeruha-rucim;
dara-smere yasmin daśana-ruci-kiñjalka-rucire
sugandhau mādyanti Smara-dahana-cakṣur-madhu-lihaḥ.

Thy face surrounded by Thy naturally curly Alakas (fore-locks), beautiful like a swarm of young honey beetles, mocks at the celebrated beauty of lotus flowers. In that smiling and fragrant face, excelling the beauty of lotus flowers and rendered charming by the brilliance of Thy lotus-filament-like rows of teeth, revel the intoxicated honey suckers of the eyes of Śiva, the destroyer of Cupid.

Notes: Honey suckers usually gather round lotuses and other flowers in bloom. Two types of honey suckers are said to gather round the face of the Devi, which far excels the oridinary lotus in its loveliness. One type of honey sucker is the curly Alakas (fore-locks) surrounding the face, which is a sign of beauty as understood in the worldly sense. But the beauty of the Devi's face is not any kind of voluptuous loveliness. This is indicated by the fact that the other type of honey suckers attracted by it, are the eyes of Śiva, who is famous as the destroyer of Kāma Ḋeva, the god of love. To state that his eyes are inebriated within the lotus of Devi's face is to assert the indescribable spiritual sublimity radiating from that face.

46

The beauty of the Devi's forehead, which resembles a crescent moon put in the reverse order, is now described.

ललाटं लावण्य-द्युति-विमल-माभाति तव यत्
द्वितीयं तन्मन्ये मकुटघटितं चन्द्रशकलम् ।
विपर्यास-न्यासा-दुभयमपि संभूय च मिथः
सुधालेपस्यूतिः परिणमति राका-हिमकरः ॥ ४६ ॥

Lalāṭam l. aṇya-dyuti-vimalam ābhāti tava yad
dvitīyam tan manye makuṭa-ghaṭitam candra-śakalam;
viparyāsa-nyāsād ubhayam api sambhūya ca mithaḥ
sudhālepa-syūtiḥ pariṇamati rākā-himakaraḥ.

Thy forehead, shining with the pure brilliance of its divine beauty, is, I fancy, a second crescent moon inverted and attached below Thy crown (in addition to the crescent moon already on it). If these two halves (the one on Thy crown with ends up and the other the crescent moon of Thy forehead with ends down) are attached in the reverse order, they can form the full moon with the nectarine fluid dripping from it.

47

The Devi's eye-brows are now described.

भ्रुवौ भुग्ने किंचिद् भुवन-भय-भङ्ग-व्यसनिनि
त्वदीये नेत्राभ्यां मधुकर-रुचिभ्यां धृतगुणम् ।
धनु-र्मन्ये सव्येतरकर-गृहीतं रतिपतेः
प्रकोष्ठे मुष्टौ च स्थगयति निगूढान्तर-मुमे ।। ४७ ।।

Bhruvau bhugne kimcid bhuvana-bhaya-bhaṅga-vyasanini
tvadīye netrābhyām madhukara-rucibhyām dhṛta-guṇam;
dhanur manye savye'tara-kara-gṛhītam ratipateḥ
prakoṣṭhe muṣṭau ca sthagayati nigūḍhā'ntaram ume

O Uma, ever intent on remedying the distress of the worlds! I am led to believe that Thy two slightly knitted eyebrows form the bow of Kāmadeva and Thy honey-beetle-

like black eyes its string, while its middle portion is hidden by the nasal ridge, as if it were the clenched fist and fore-arm of Kama Deva's right arm holding it.

Notes: Kāmadeva's bow is reputed to have black honey bees as bow-string and flowers as arrows. The enchanting nature of the Devi's eyebrows are expressed by this metaphor. To complete the figure the inter-space between the eye brows has to be explained, and the poet's fancy extols it by describing it as hidden by the fore-arm and clenched fist of Kāmadeva's right hand that holds the bow. The holding of the bow in the right hand indicates that it is not for use.

48

The Devi's eyes are now praised.

अहः सूते सव्यं तव नयन-मर्कात्मकतया
त्रियामां वामं ते सृजति रजनीनायकतया ।
तृतीया ते दृष्टि-र्दरदलित-हेमाम्बुज-रुचिः
समाधत्ते सन्ध्यां दिवस-निशयो-रन्तरचरीम् ।। ४८ ।।

Ahaḥ sūte savyam tava nayanam ark'ātmakatayā
triyāmām vāmam te sṛjati rajanī-nāyakatayā;
tṛtīyā te dṛṣṭir dara-dalita-hemāmbuja-ruciḥ
samādhatte sandhyām divasa-niśayor antara-carīm

Thy right eye as the sun causes the day time, while from the left eye is born the night time with the moon as its lord. Then there is Thy third eye (on the forehead above), resembling a golden lotus slightly in bloom, which is res-

ponsible for the two Sandhyas, the twilight time that comes between day and night (in the morning and the evening).

Notes: The implication of bringing the sun and the moon into the description of the Devi's eyes is that all time, determined in periods like day, night, fortnight, month, years, seasons, Yugas and Kalpas, is under the command of the Devi.

49

The verse gives a further description of the Devi's eyes in a highly sophisticated metaphor.

विशाला कल्याणी स्फुटरुचि-रयोध्या कुवलयैः
कृपाधाराधारा किमपि मधुराऽऽभोगवतिका ।
अवन्ती दृष्टिस्ते बहुनगर-विस्तार-विजया
ध्रुवं तत्तन्नाम-व्यवहरण-योग्या विजयते ।। ४९ ।।

Viśālā kalyāṇī sphuṭa-rucir ayodhyā kuvalayaiḥ
kṛpā-dhārā-dhārā kim api madhur'ābhogavatika;
avantī dṛṣṭis te bahu-nagara-vistāra-vijayā
dhruvam tattan-nāma-vyavaharaṇa-yogyā vijayate

All glory to Thy eyes which are wide (Viśāla); auspicious (Kalyāṇī) because of being brilliantly clear; undefeated (Ayodhyā) even by blue lilies; shedding a continuous flow of grace (Kṛpādhārā-dhārā); sweet without display (Avyakta-madhura); long (Ābhogavatī); and offering protection to the world (Avantī). Surpassing (Vijayā) all these great cities in their uniqueness, Thy eyes deserve to be denoted by all the names mentioned above.

Notes: The Sanskrit names given in the brackets are the names of eight great cities of the past—Viśāla, Kalyāṇi, Ayodhyā, Dhārā, Madhurā, Bhogavatī, Avantī and Vijayā. They also denote eight kinds of glances associated with women. But the uniqueness of the different forms of Devi's look is that they can be used in rites to cause agitation, attraction, tendernes amounting to liquefaction, infatuation, enchantment, rejection, anger and death respectively. Some commentators think that wherever the Divine Mother in Her different manifestations caused the feelings mentioned above, those places or cities got the names enumerated.

50

The third eye of the Devi is now described.

कवीनां सन्दर्भ-स्तबक-मकरन्दैक-रसिकं
कटाक्ष-व्याक्षेप-भ्रमरकलभौ कर्णयुगलम् ।
अमुञ्चन्तौ दृष्ट्वा तव नवरसास्वाद-तरलौ
असूया-संसर्गा-दलिकनयनं किञ्चिदरुणम् ॥ ५० ॥

Kavīnām sandarbha-stabaka-makarand'aika-rasikam
kaṭākṣa-vyākṣepa-bhramara-kalabhau-karṇa-yugalam;
amuñcantau dṛṣṭvā tava nava-ras'āsvāda taralau-
asūyā-samsargād alika-nayanam kiñcid aruṇam.

The two honey-bees of Thy long eyes are unceasingly hovering about Thy ear, ever absorbed in imbibing the honey dripping from the flower bunch of the nine poetic sentiments poured into them by poet-devotees (singing hymns on Thee). Seeing this good fortune of the two eyes,

Thy third eye in the forehead looks slightly red out of jealous hostility.

Notes: The poet fancies that the movement of the pupils of the Devi's long eyes towards the ears when she makes side glances are two honey bees which are ever attracted to the ears in order to drink the honey of poetic praises with which they are ever being filled by poet-devotees singing devotional songs. The poet attributes the redness of the third eye of the Devi to its feeling of jealousy at the good fortune of the other two eyes which, due to their nearness to the ear, are able to imbibe the recital of poetic hymns that are always entering into the Devi's ears.

51

The look of the Mother's eyes is now described.

शिवे शृङ्गारार्द्रा तदितरजने कुत्सनपरा
सरोषा गङ्गायां गिरिशचरिते विस्मयवती ।
हराहिभ्यो भीता सरसिरुह-सौभाग्य-जननी
सखीषु स्मेरा ते मयि जननि दृष्टिः सकरुणा ॥ ५१ ॥

Śive śṛṅgārārdrā tad-itara-jane kutsana-parā
saroṣa Gaṅgāyām Giriśa-carite? vismayavatī;
har'āhibhyo bhītā sarasi-ruha-saubhāgya-jananī
sakhīṣu smerā te mayi janani dṛṣṭiḥ sakaruṇā

O Mother! The expression of Thy look at Siva is characterised by the sentiment of love; at others with that of dislike; at the co-wife Gangā with that of anger; at the hearing of the great deeds of Śiva, with that of wonder; at the great serpents forming the ornament of Śiva, with that

of dread; at the sight of Thy comrades, with that of light-hearted sympathy characterised by a patronising smile; and at me, a devotee, with that of a compassionate expression. And besides, Thy look has the red-tinged loveliness of a lotus flower, indicating heroism.

Notes: This verse also states that all the Rasas or sentiments are simultaneously expressed in the look of the Devi, which is not possible in a human face. The Rasas are nine; *Sṛṅgāra* (love), *Bhībhatsa* (disgust), *Raudra* (anger), *Adbhuta* (wonder), *Bhayānaka* (terror), *Vīra* (heroism), *Hāsya* (mirth), *Karuṇa* (compassion), and *Śānta* (composure). In this verse only eight of these find a place, probably because *Sānta* is not considered as a full-fledged Rasa by many authorities on poetics.

52

The irresistible charms of the Mother's eye is further described.

गते कर्णाभ्यर्णं गरुत इव पक्ष्माणि दधती
पुरां भेत्तुश्चित्तप्रशम-रस-विद्रावण-फले ।
इमे नेत्रे गोत्राधरपति-कुलोत्तंस-कलिके
तवाकर्णाकृष्ट-स्मरशर-विलासं कलयतः ॥ ५२ ॥

Gate karṇābhyarṇam garuta iva pakṣmāṇi dadhatī.
purām behttuś citta-praśama-rasa-vidrāvaṇa-phale;
ime netre gotrā-dhara-pati-kulottamsa-kalike
tav'ākarṇ'ākṛṣṭa-smara-śara-vilāsam kalayataḥ.

O Mother! Thou the flower bud placed on the crest of the Mountain King's dynasty! These long eyes of Thine,

which extend up to the ears, with eye-lashes resembling the feathery wings attached to arrows and which are engaged in disturbing the placidity of the mind of Śiva look like the arrows of Cupid aimed and drawn up to the ear.

53

The colour of the Devi's eyes is praised:

विभक्त-त्रैवर्ण्यं व्यतिकरित-लीलाञ्जनतया
विभाति त्वन्नेत्र-त्रितय-मिद-मीशानदयिते ।
पुनः स्रष्टुं देवान् द्रुहिण-हरि-रुद्रानुपरतान्
रजः सत्त्वं बिभ्रत् तम इति गुणानां त्रयमिव ॥ ५३ ॥

Vibhakta-traivarṇyam vyatikarita-līlā'ñjanatayā
vibhāti tvan-netra-tritayam idam Īśāna-dayite;
punaḥ sraṣṭum devān Druhiṇa-Hari-Rudrān uparatān
rajaḥ sattvam bibhrat tama iti guṇānām trayam iva

O Consort of Īśvara! Thy three eyes look tri-coloured when the black of the beautifying collyrium shines by the side of their natural white and reddish tinges, each keeping its distinctiveness. It looks as if these three colours represent the three Guṇas of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, which Thou assumest with a view to revive Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra after their dissolution in the Pralaya, and start them once again on the creative activity.

Notes: The natural colour of the eye is white, but in the case of great personages they have also a reddish tinge or line. Collyrium, which is usually used to beautify the eye, adds a

third colour. The poet fancies these colours of red, white and black as representing the Gunas of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas respectively, which are assumed by Śakti as the Creative Power.

54

The three colours of the Devi's eyes are further described:

पवित्रीकर्तुं नः पशुपति-पराधीन-हृदये
दयामित्रै-र्नेत्रै-ररुण-धवल-श्याम-रुचिभिः ।
नदः शोणो गङ्गा तपनतनयेति ध्रुवममुं
त्रयाणां तीर्थाना-मुपनयसि संभेद-मनघम् ॥ ५४ ॥

Pavitrīkartum naḥ paśupati-parādhīna-hṛdaye
dayā-mitrair netrair aruṇa-dhavala-śyāma rucibhiḥ;
nadaḥ śoṇā gaṅgā tapana-tanay'eti dhruvam amum
trayāṇām tīrthānām upanayasi sambhedam anagham.

O Mother who art ever devoted to Śiva! It seems certain that with Thy kindly eyes having the three colours of red, white and black, Thou presentest to us the confluence of the holy rivers of Soṇa, Gaṅgā and Yamunā to sanctify ourselves (by getting immersed in them).

Notes: The confluence of the white waters of Gaṅga and the blue waters of Yamunā at Prayāgā (Allahabad) is well known for its sanctifying effect. But Śoṇa, whose water is red, does not join the main stream at Prayāgā, but much further away down-stream. But the poet devotee takes Nature as a unified whole in the Devi, and in that sense speaks of the three streams as uniting in Her eyebrow with their three colours.

55

Further description of the features of the Mother's eyes is given.

निमेषोन्मेषाभ्यां प्रलयमुदयं याति जगती
तवेत्याहुः सन्तो धरणिधर-राजन्यतनये ।
त्वदुन्मेषाज्जातं जगदिद-मशेषं प्रलयतः
परित्रातुं शङ्के परिहृत-निमेषा-स्तव दृशः ।। ५५ ।।

Nimeṣ'onmeṣābhyām pralayam udayam yāti jagatī
tave'ty āhuḥ santo Dharaṇī-dhara-rājanya-tanaye;
tvad-unmeṣāj jātam jagad idam aśeṣam pralyataḥ
pari-trātum śaṅke parihṛta-nimeṣās tava dṛśaḥ.

O Daughter of the king of mountains! Great men say that the closing and opening of Thy eye-lids mark the dissolution and creation of this universe. Therefore it must be to prevent this universe, that has sprung at the opening of Thy eyes, from going into dissolution that Thou dost not wink but keepest Thy eyes always open.

Notes: The belief is that the Divinities do not wink. Their eyes are always open. The poet finds a Cosmic Purpose in this feature of the Mother's eyes.

56

More praise is bestowed on the Devi's eyes.

तवापर्णे कर्णे जपनयन-पैशुन्य-चकिता
निलीयन्ते तोये नियत-मनिमेषाः शफरिका: ।

इयं च श्री-र्बद्धच्छद-पुटकवाटं कुवलयं
जहाति प्रत्यूषे निशि च विघटय्य प्रविशति ।। ५६ ।।

Tav'āparṇe karṇe-japa-nayana-paiśunya-cakitā
nilīyante toye niyatam animeṣāḥ śapharikāḥ;
iyam ca śrīr baddhac-chada-puṭa-kavāṭam kuvalayam
jahāti pratyūṣe niśi ca vighaṭayya praviśati.

O Aparṇā! **The** Śapharikas **(female fish) hide themselves in water in fear, afraid of the tell-tale activities of Thy eyes against them, their rivals; and** Śri **the Goddess of Beauty, abandons the closed petals of blue lily during the day (in order to reside in Thy lotus-like eyes), and returns again at night to the blooming blue lily (when Thy eyes are closed in sleep).**

Notes: Small-sized fish and blue water lily are common objects of comparison to describe the beauty of a woman's eye. These fish are habituated to live under deep water. The poet fancies that the long eyes of the Devi, comparable to a fish, are extending upto the ear carrying tales to Her about these fish, who consider themselves naturally to be the rivals of the Devi's eyes. The poet therefore further fancies that out of fear of the consequences of this rivalry, these fish live in deep waters. He next uses also another analogy from Nature to praise the beauty of the Devi's eyes. The blue lily blooms at night and closes during day. It is fancied by the poet that the loveliness of the blooming lily at night is due to the Divine beauty of the Devi's eyes shifted from them to it while the Devi closes Her eyes in sleep at night.

57

The poet devotee prays to the Devi to cast Her compassionate look on him:

दृशा द्राघीयस्या दरदलित-नीलोत्पल-रुचा
दवीयांसं दीनं स्नपय कृपया मामपि शिवे ।
अनेनायं धन्यो भवति न च ते हानिरियता
वने वा हर्म्ये वा समकर-निपातो हिमकरः ॥ ५७ ॥

Dṛśā drāghīyasyā dara-dalita-nīlotpala-rucā
davīyāmsam dīnam snapaya kṛpayā mām api Śive;
anenāyam dhanyo bhavati na ca te hānir iyatā
vane vā harmye vā sama-kara-nipāto himakaraḥ.

O Consort of Śiva! Grace my miserable self too, in spite of my being far removed from Thee (for lack of devotion), with the long-ranging and compassionate look of Thy eyes, which defeat the slightly blooming blue water lily in beauty. By this my humble self shall feel blessed, while to Thee it involves no loss. The rays of the moon fall alike, indeed, on a mansion and a wilderness.

58

The Devi's side-glance is described.

अरालं ते पालीयुगल-मगराजन्यतनये
न केषा-माधत्ते कुसुमशर-कोदण्ड-कुतुकम् ।

तिरश्चीनो यत्र श्रवणपथ-मुल्लङ्घ्य विलसन्
अपांग-व्यासंगो दिशति शरसन्धान-धिषणाम् ॥५८॥

Arālam te pālī-yugalam aga-rājanya-tanaye
na keṣām ādhatte kusuma-śara-kodaṇḍa kutukam;
tiraścīno yatra śravaṇa-patham ullaṅghya vilasann-
apāṅga-vyāsaṅgo diśati śara-samdhāna-dhiṣaṇām.

O daughter of the Mountain King! Who will not perceive the graces of the bow of Kāma, the flower-arrowed god of love, on seeing Thy pair of arched ridges between the eyes and the ears (Pālī-ugalam.) For, Thy long side-glances across the ridges reaching up to Thy ears give the impression of an arrow mounted on a bow-string.

59

The face, ear-ornaments and the cheeks of the Devi are praised.

स्फुरद्गण्डाभोग-प्रतिफलित-ताटङ्कयुगलं
चतुश्चक्रं मन्ये तव मुखमिदं मन्मथरथम् ।
यमारुह्य द्रुह्यत्यवनिरथ-मर्केन्दुचरणं
महावीरो मारः प्रमथपतये सज्जितवते ॥ ५९ ॥

Sphurad-gaṇḍābhoga-pratiphalita-tāṭaṅka yugalam
catuś-cakram manye tava mukham idam manmatha-ratham;
yam-āruhya druhyaty avani-ratham arkendu-caraṇam
mahāvīro māraḥ pramatha-pataye sajjitavate.

I fancy that Thy face, having two ear-ornaments and their reflection in Thy glistening cheeks, is verily the four-wheeled chariot of Manmatha, the god of love (who can stir the mind of people to its depth). It is seated in this chariot of Thy face that he became valiant enough to inflict pangs on Śiva, the Lord of Pramatha hosts, when, ready for the destruction of the Tripuras, he was mounted on his earth-chariot having the sun and the moon for its two wheels.

Notes: The Devi's face, with her two ear ornaments and its reflection in Her shining cheeks, is compared to a chariot, using which Manmatha, the god of love, penetrated the heart of Śiva with his arrows of amorous inducements, though Śiva is so mighty as to be seated in the chariot of the cosmos with the sun and moon as wheels. It means that the charm of the Devi's face is superior to all the stupendous energy we find manifested as the universe.

60

The Devi's speech is praised:

सरस्वत्याः सूक्ती-रमृतलहरी कौशलहरीः
पिबन्त्याः शर्वाणि श्रवण-चुलुकाभ्या-मविरलम् ।
चमत्कार-श्लाघाचलित-शिरसः कुण्डलगणो
झणत्कारैस्तारैः प्रतिवचन-माचष्ट इव ते ।। ६० ।।

Sarasvatyāḥ sūktīr amṛta-laharī-kauśala-harīḥ
pibantyāh Śarvāṇi śrāvaṇa-culukābhyām aviralam;
camatkāra-ślāghā-calita-śirasaḥ kuṇḍala-gaṇo
jhaṇatkarais tāraiḥ prati-vacanam ācaṣṭa iva te.

O consort of Śiva! Sarasvatī the Goddess of Learning, imbibing continuously through the cup of her ears Thy sweet speech that humbles the delectableness of the flood of the immortal drink Amṛta, replies congratulating Thee, as it were, by the loud clang of her ear-ornaments, as she shakes her head in appreciation of Thy delightful speech.

61

The following verse is in praise of the Devi's nose:

असौ नासावंश-स्तुहिनगिरिवंश-ध्वजपटि
त्वदीयो नेदीयः फलतु फल-मस्माकमुचितम् ।
वहत्यन्तर्मुक्ताः शिशिरकर-निश्वास-गलितं
समृद्ध्या यत्तासां बहिरपि च मुक्तामणिधरः ।।६१।।

Asau nāsā-vamśas tuhina-girivamśa-dhvajapaṭi
tvadīyo nedīyaḥ phalatu phalam asmākam ucitam;
vahaty antar muktāḥ śiśira-kara-niśvāsa galitam
samṛddhyā yat tāsām bahir api ca muktā-maṇi-dharaḥ.

61 O Flag of the House of the Mountain of Snow! May Thy nose, which is, as it were, the hollow bamboo staff of that flag, bestow on us the desired fruit. The hollow of that staff-like nose is full of pearls; for it is out of their abundance that one pearl, pushed out by the moon-cooled breath of the left nostril, has come out to be Thy nasal pendant.

62

The Devi's lips are now described.

प्रकृत्याऽऽरक्तायास्तव सुदति दन्तच्छदरुचेः
प्रवक्ष्ये सादृश्यं जनयतु फलं विद्रुमलता ।
न बिंबं तद्बिंब-प्रतिफलन-रागा-दरुणितं
तुलामध्यारोढुं कथमिव न लज्जेत कलया ।। ६२ ।।

Prakṛtyā'raktāyās tava sudati danta-cchada-ruceḥ
pravakṣye sādṛśyam janayatu phalaṃ vidruma-latā;
na bimbam tad-bimba-pratiphalana-rāgād aruṇitam
tulām adhyā'roḍhum katham iva na lajjeta kalayā.

62 O Devi with attractive rows of teeth! I shall now try to find out an object of comparison to describe Thy naturally red lips. But I am afraid I shall have to wait for this until the coral creeper (red all over) produces a fruit (which one can expect to be more red than the creeper itself). But is there not the Bimba fruit as a fitting object of comparison? No; for how will Bimba fruit not feel ashamed to stand before those lips, a mere reflection of which has made that fruit red!

Notes: The poet-devotee uses his fancy to say that the redness of the Devi's lips is matchless and incomparable. The imaginary fruit of the very red coral creeper, to which one can reasonably attribute greater redness than the creeper itself, is never going to appear. Then he turns to the Bimba fruit noted for its redness. But he soon realises that its redness is only a pale reflection of the redness of the Devi's

lips, and therefore it can never be a fit object of comparison to describe its matrix.

63

The Devi's smiling moon-like face is praised:

स्मितज्योत्स्नाजालं तव वदनचन्द्रस्य पिबतां
चकोराणा-मासी-दतिरसतया चञ्चु-जडिमा ।
अतस्ते शीतांशो-रमृतलहरी-माम्लरुचयः
पिबन्ति स्वच्छन्दं निशि निशि भृशं काञ्जिकधिया ।।

Smita-jyotsnā-jālam tava vadana-candrasya pibatām
cakorāṇām āsīd ati-rasatayā cañcu-jaḍimā;
atas te śītāmśor amṛta-laharīm āmla-rucayaḥ
pibanti svacchandam niśi niśi bhṛśam kāñjika-dhiyā.

63 The Cakora bird has got its tongue insensitised because of the extreme satiety generated by drinking the luminous light of Thy smiling face. It is for this reason that every night it drinks to its fill the light of the 'natural moon' under the impression that it is some sour gruel (that will relieve the insensitiveness of its tongue).

Notes: It is a fancy of Sanskrit poets that the bird Cakora thrives by drinking moonlight. The poet wants to say in praise of the Devi's face, that the moon is no comparison to Her shining face by fancying that the Cakora drinks moonlight, not because it is delectable, but only under the impression that it is some sour gruel that will give relief to its tongue that has come to the stage of insensitiveness by

extreme satiety generated by drinking the excessively sweet moonlike radiance of the Devi's smiling face.

64

The tongue of the Devi is praised in this verse:

अविश्रान्तं पत्यु-र्गुणगण-कथाम्रेडनजपा
जपापुष्पच्छाया तव जननि जिह्वा जयति सा ।
यदग्रासीनायाः स्फटिकदृष-दच्छच्छविमयी
सरस्वत्या मूर्तिः परिणमति माणिक्यवपुषा ।।

Aviśrāntam patyur guṇa-gaṇa-kathā'mreḍana-japā
japā-puṣpac-chāyā tava janani jihvā jayati sā;
yad-agrāsīnāyāḥ sphaṭika-dṛṣad-acchac-chavi mayī
sarasvatyā mūrtiḥ pariṇamati māṇikya-vapuṣā.

64 Hail unto Thy tongue which defies the Japa (hibiscus) flowers in its redness and is constantly engaged in the Japa (mutterings) that give expression to the glories of Thy Consort! The ruddiness of that tongue is so intense that the goddess of speech Sarasvatī, who dwells on the tip of that tongue, gets her crystal-like white complexion changed into the colour of a ruby (noted for its reddish tinge).

65

The betel rolls chewed by the Devi are praised:

रणे जित्वा दैत्या-नपहृत-शिरस्त्रैः कवचिभिः
निवृत्तै-श्चण्डांश-त्रिपुरहर-निर्माल्य-विमुखैः ।

विशाखेन्द्रोपेन्द्रैः शशिविशद-कर्पूरशकला
विलीयन्ते मातस्तव वदनताम्बूल-कबलाः ॥ ६५ ॥

Raṇe jitvā'daityān apahṛta-śirastraiḥ kavacibhir
nivṛttais Caṇḍāmśa-Tripurahara-nirmālva-vimukhaiḥ;
viśākh'endr'opendraiḥ śaśi-viśada-karpūra-śakalā
vilīyante mātas tava vadana-tāmbūla-kabalāḥ.

65 Rejecting the leavings of Śiva as the share of the devotee Caṇḍa, celestials like Kumāra, Indra and Viṣṇu, after their victory over the Asuras, come to Thee, with their head dress removed and only the mails on, to receive as Thy gracious gift (prasada) the betel rolls used by Thee, and chew them until they along with the white pieces of refined camphol contained in them dissolve.

66

The sweetness of the Devi's voice is praised:

विपञ्च्या गायन्ती विविध-मपदानं पुररिपो-
स्त्वयारब्धे वक्तुं चलितशिरसा साधुवचने ।
तदीयै-र्माधुर्यै-रपलपित-तन्त्रीकलरवां
निजां वीणां वाणी निचुलयति चोलेन निभृतम् ॥६६॥

Vipañcyā gāyantī vividham apadānam Puraripos
tvay'ārabdhe vaktum calita-śirasā sādhuvacane;
tadīyair mādhuryair apalapita-tantrī-kala-ravām
nijām vīṇām vāṇī nieulayati colena nibhṛtam.

66 When, on hearing the songs on the greatness and achievements of Śiva tuned on the Vīna by Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning and fine arts, Thou beginnest to speak nodding Thy head in appreciation, the sweetness of Thy voice seems to cast ridicule on the soft melody of that musical instrument, and Sarasvatī therefore secretly puts it in its case.

67

The Devi's chin is praised.

करा‌ग्रेण स्पृष्टं तुहिनगिरिणा वत्सलतया
गिरीशेनोदस्तं मुहुरधरपानाकुलतया ।
करग्राह्यं शंभोर्मुखमुकुरवृन्तं गिरिसुते
कथंकारं ब्रूम-स्तव चुबुक-मौपम्यरहितम् ।। ६७ ।।

Karāgreṇa spṛṣṭam tuhiṅa-giriṇā vatsalatayā
girīśen'odastamn muhur adhara-pān'ākulatayā;
kara-grāhyam śambhor mukḥa-mukura-vṛntam Giri-sute
katham-kāram brūmas tava cubukam aupamya-rahitam.

67 O daughter of Himavat! How can we poets describe the unmatched beauty of Thy chin, which is stroked with all affection by Thy father the Mountain King, which is again and again lifted up by Thy Consort Śambhu in the intensity of his desire to kiss Thee repeatedly, and which forms the handle of the mirror of Thy face for Śambhu to hold and view.

68

The Devi's face and neck are now praised:

भुजाश्लेषान्नित्यं पुरदमयितुः कण्टकवती
तव ग्रीवा धत्ते मुखकमलनाल-श्रिय-मियम् ।
स्वतः श्वेता कालागरु-बहुल-जम्बालमलिना
मृणाली-लालित्यं वहति यदधो हारलतिका ॥६८

Bhujāśleṣān nityam Pura-damayituḥ kaṇṭaka-vatī
tava grīvā dhatte mukha-kamalanāla-śriyam iyam;
svataḥ śvetā kālāgaru-bahula-jambāla-malinā
mṛṇālī-lālityam vahati yadadho hāra-latikā.

68 Thy neck, with horripilations caused by the constant embraces of Thy Consort, the Destroyer of the Cities, resembles the thorny stalk of Thy lotus-like face. For, below Thy neck are Thy naturally white cluster of pearl necklaces, which, being discoloured by the generously applied dark-coloured Agaru paste on the chest, bears the comeliness of the tender bottom part of the stalk of Thy lotus-like face embedded in mire.

69

The Mother's neck is deseribed

गले रेखास्तिस्रो गति-गमक-गीतैक-निपुणे
विवाह-व्यानद्ध-प्रगुणगुण-संख्या-प्रतिभुवः ।

विराजन्ते नानाविध-मधुर-रागाकर-भुवां
त्रयाणां ग्रामाणां स्थिति-नियम-सीमान इव ते ॥

Gale rekhās tisro gati-gamaka-gīt'aika nipuṇe
vivāha-vyānaddha-praguṇa-guṇa-samkhyā-pratibhuvaḥ;
virājante nānā-vidha-madhura-rāgākara-bhuvām
trayāṇām grāmāṇām sthiti-niyama-sīmāna iva te.

69 O Mistress of the musical technicalities of Gati (procedure) Gamakam (undulations) and Gītam (song)! As though for the confirmation of the three-foldness of the strands of the auspicious string made by twisting several threads and tied round Thy neck (surrounding the mangala-sutra) by Thy Consort at the time of Thy marriage, shine forth the three lines of Thy neck, standing, as it were, as the boundaries demarcating the three musical scales (or Gamakas consisting of Saḍja, Madhyama, and Gāndhāra), which form the source of the various melodies of musical modes.

Notes: Three lines on the neck are one of the features of noble personages. The poet fancies that these stand to represent and confirm that there are three strands in the auspicious string tied on the neck at the time of marriage, beside the *mangala-sūtra,* as is the practice according to some. Further he fancies that these three lines stand to indicate that the Devi has mastery over all the three musical scales (Gamakas) of which only one, known as Sadja, comes within the capacity of human beings to practise.

70

The Devi's arms are praised

मृणाली-मृद्वीनां तव भुजलतानां चतसृणां
चतुर्भिः सौन्दर्यं सरसिजभवः स्तौति वदनैः ।
नखेभ्यः सन्त्रस्यन् प्रथम-मथना-दन्धकरिपोः
चतुर्णां शीर्षाणां सम-मभयहस्तार्पण-धिया ॥

Mṛṇālī-mṛdvīnām tava bhuja-latānām catasṛṇāṁ
caturbhiḥ saundaryam Sarasija-bhavaḥ stauti vadanaiḥ;
nakhebhyaḥ samtrasyan prathama-mathanādandhaka-ripoś
caturṇām śīrṣāṇām samam abhaya-hast'ārapaṇa-dhiyā.

70 The lotus-born Brahmā, being afraid of the finger-nails of Sadāśiva, with which the latter in former times nipped off his fifth head, is now praising simultaneously with the remaining four heads the comeliness of Thy four creeper-like arms resembling the stalk of lotus in beauty, so that Thou might give those heads protection from the fear of a fate similar to that of the lost head.

Notes: The reference is to a story noted in Śaiva Purāṇas of how Brahmā and Viṣṇu strove to discover the head and feet of Śiva, assuming the form of a Swan and a Boar respectively. Brahmā as Swan flew up and Viṣṇu as Boar went down on this errand, but failed to discover the extremities of Śiva. So they returned. Brahmā, however, had come across a Ketaki flower in his flight up, and knowing from it that it was coming from the head of Śiva, took it before returning. He proclaimed that he had reached the head of

Śiva and produced the flower as evidence. This being a lie, Śiva punished him by nipping off the head with which he uttered this sacrilegious lie. With this incident in mind the poet fancies that Brahmā is afraid ever afterwards of Śiva nipping off any of the other heads too, and as a safeguard against this, he wants to win the Devi's favour. For this he is engaged in praising Devi always with all his four surviving heads.

71

The Devi's hands are praised:

नखानामुद्योतैर्नवनलिनरागं विहसतां
कराणां ते कान्तिं कथय कथयामः कथमुमे ।
कयाचिद्वा साम्यं भजतु कलया हन्त कमलं
यदि क्रीडल्लक्ष्मी-चरणतल-लाक्षारस-चणम् ।।

Nakhānām uddyotair nava-nalina-rāgam vihasatām
karāṇām te kāntim kathaya kathayāmaḥ katham Ume;
kayācid vā sāmyam bhajatu kalayā hanta kamalam
yadi krīḍal-lakṣmī-caraṇa-tala-lākṣā-rasa-caṇam.

71 O Uma! Pray, tell us how we can describe the splendour of Thy hands, which, being lit up with the radiance of Thy nails, surpasses the brightness of the morning's lotus blooms. Perhaps these flowers can attain to some similarity with Thy nails when their redness is enhanced by contact with the lac-dye of the feet of goddess Lakṣmī who sports in them.

72

The Devi's breasts are praised:

समं देवि स्कन्द-द्विपवदन-पीतं स्तनयुगं
तवेदं नः खेदं हरतु सततं प्रस्नुत-मुखम् ।
यदालोक्याशङ्काकुलित-हृदयो हासजनकः
स्वकुम्भौ हेरंबः परिमृशति हस्तेन झडिति ।।

Samam Devi Skanda-Dvipa-vadana-pītam stana-yugam
tavedam naḥ khedaṃ haratu satatam prasnuta-mukham;
yad ālokyā'śaṅk' ākulita-hṛdayo hāsa-janakaḥ
sva-kumbhau herambaḥ parimṛśati hastena jhaḍiti.

72 O Mother! May we be relieved of all our sorrows by Thy breasts, from which milk is flowing always and which are being simultaneously sucked by both Skanda and Gaṇeśa, Thy sons. All of a sudden Gaṇeśa (Heramba), looking at Thy breasts, feels with his hands whether the pair of frontal globes on his elephant face are there in their proper places (or whether they have disappeared to become Thy breasts present before his eyes), thus giving occasion for great fun (to his parents and onlookers).

73

The glory of the Devi's breasts is again repeated:

अमू ते वक्षोजा-वमृतरस-माणिक्य-कुतुपौ
न संदेहस्पन्दो नगपति-पताके मनसि नः ।

पिबन्तौ तौ यस्मा-दविदित-वधूसङ्ग-रसिकौ
कुमारावद्यापि द्विरदवदन-क्रौञ्चदलनौ ॥

Arıū te vakṣojāv amṛtarasa-māṇikya-kutupau
na samdeha-spando nagapati-patāke manasi naḥ;
pibantau tau yasmād avidita-vadhū--saṅga-·rasikau
kumārāv adyāpi Dvirada-vadana-Krauñca-dalanau.

73 **O the Mountain-King's flag of victory! We have not even the shadow of a doubt about Thy two breasts being jars made of** Māṇikya **(ruby) and filled with** Amṛta, **the immortal drink. For, it is by drinking their contents that Thy two sons, the mountain-piercing** Kumāra **and the elephant-headed** Vināyaka, **have remained young boys** (celibates) **without knowing woman, to this day.**

Notes: The poet seems to say indirectly that it is the milk of the Devi's grace that enables one to overcome sexuality. This verse also contradicts the practice of associating consorts with these Deities as is done by some of the followers of their cults.

74

The necklace on the Mother's breast is praised:

वहत्यम्ब स्तम्बेरम-दनुज-कुंभप्रकृतिभिः
समारब्धां मुक्तामणिभि-रमलां हारलतिकाम् ।
कुचाभोगो बिम्बाधर-रुचिभि-रन्तः शबलितां
प्रताप-व्यामिश्रां पुरदमयितुः कीर्तिमिव ते ॥

Vahaty amba stamberama-danuja-kumbha prakṛtibhiḥ
samārabdhām muktā-maṇibhir amalām hāra-latikām;
kucābhogo bimb'ādhara-rucibhir antaḥ śabalitām
pratāpa-vyāmiśrām Pura-damayituḥ kīrtim iva te.

74 O Mother! In the region of Thy breasts is a flawless necklace made of pearls got from the frontal globe of Gajāsura (the elephant-demon). It rests there with its white brilliance variegated from within by the reflection of the ruddy tinge of Thy Bimba-like lips, as if it were the confluence of the (white) fame and the (red) valour of Thy Consort, the Destroyer of the Cities.

Notes: Sanskrit poets fancy that the frontal globe on the forehead of elephants contains pearls. They also conceive whiteness as symbolising fame and redness, valour. The whiteness of the pearl necklace and the reddish tinge of the reflection of the Devi's ruddy lips in it make the poet fancy Her pearl necklace as the confluence of Her Consort Śiva's fame and valour.

75

The milk of the Devi's breast is praised again:

तव स्तन्यं मन्ये धरणिधरकन्ये हृदयतः
पयः पारावारः परिवहति सारस्वतमिव ।
दयावत्या दत्तं द्रमिलशिशु-रास्वाद्य तव यत्
कवीनां प्रौढाना-मजनि कमनीयः कवयिता ।।

Tava stanyam manye Dharaṇi-dhara-kanye hṛdayataḥ
payaḥ pārāvāraḥ parivahati sārasvatam iva;

dayāvatyā dattam dramila-śiśur āsvādya tava yat
kavīnām prauḍhānām ajani kamanīyaḥ kavayitā.

75 O Daughter of the Mountain-King! I fancy that Thy breast milk is the milk-ocean emerging as poetic inspiration from Thy heart. For, it was by drinking it, so graciously given by Thee, that the child of the Dramila country became a noted poet among great composers.

Notes: The identity of this *Dramila-śiśu* who became a very great poet by drinking the Mother's milk, is a matter of controversy among commentators. Two commentators, Lakṣmīdhara and Kaivalyāśrama, maintain that the reference is to Śaṅkarācārya himself, and give some stories from his early life to justify it. These stories are not found in any of the Śaṅkara-digvijayas, which give the traditions about Śaṅkara's life. The more likely view is that the reference is to the great Saivite Saint Tirujñānasambandhar who was a composer of great devotional songs in praise of Śiva. Śaivite traditions maintain that once when he was a child three years old, he insisted on accompanying his father to the local Śiva temple. The father left the child on the bank of the temple tank and took a dip in the sacred water. The child began to cry, 'O mother! O father'. Hearing the cry, Lord Śiva and Pārvatī Devi appeared in the sky. At the Lord's behest the Devi filled a cup of gold with milk from Her own breasts and fed the child with it. Thus the child literally imbibed Devi's Grace and burst into an ecstatic song glorifying the Divine pair. Tirujñānasambandhar became a hallowed saint noted as much for his mellifluous devotional songs as for spreading Saivism in the South. He lived in the 8th century, and so was a contemporary of Śaṅkara or came a little earlier to him.

There is therefore every possibility of Śrī Śaṅkara knowing this tradition that is supported by authentic texts. Dramila is what our modern racists have made into Drāviḍa. Our ancients did not know of any such race. It is the name of a part of Bhārata-khaṇḍa in which modern Tamil Nādu also falls. Dramila became Draviḍa and then Drāviḍa.

76

The Devi's Romavali or line of hair above the navel is praised:

हरक्रोध-ज्वालावलिभि-रवलीढेन वपुषा
गभीरे ते नाभीसरसि कृतसङ्गो मनसिजः ।
समुत्तस्थौ तस्मा-दचलतनये धूमलतिका
जनस्तां जानीते तव जननि रोमावलिरिति ॥

Hara-krodha-jvālāvalibhir avalīḍhena vapuṣā
gabhīre te nābhī-sarasi kṛtasaṅgo manasijaḥ;
samuttasthau tasmād acala-tanaye dhūma-latikā
janas tām jānīte tava janani rom'āvalir iti.

76 O Mother born of the Mountain! When the flames of Śiva's anger began to envelop Kāma-deva (Cupid), he took refuge in the deep lake of Thy navel. The fire that thus got extinguished sent forth a thin creeper-like column of smoke, which men describe as Thy Romāvali or the line of hair that goes up from Thy navel.

77

This verse also praises the Romavali of Devi:

यदेतत्कालिन्दी-तनुतर-तरङ्गाकृति शिवे
कृशे मध्ये किञ्चिज्जननि तव यद्भाति सुधियाम् ।
विमर्दा-दन्योन्यं कुचकलशयो-रन्तरगतं
तनूभूतं व्योम प्रविशदिव नाभिं कुहरिणीम् ।।

Yad etat kālindī-tanu-tara-taraṅg'ākṛti Śive
kṛśe madhye kimcij janani tava yad bhāti sudhiyām;
vimardād anyo'nyam kuca-kalaśayor antara-gatam
tanū-bhūtam vyoma praviśad iva nābhīṁ kuhariṇīm'.

77 O Consort of Siva! What in Thy slender middle region shines before me and what is seen by devotees as Thy navel-hair (Romāvali) like the subtle ripples on the surface of Kālindī (Yamuna), is the Vyoma (sky) or inter-space between Thy bulging breasts, thinned by their pressure and forced into the cavity of the navel.

78

The Devi's navel is praised:

स्थिरो गङ्गावर्तः स्तनमुकुल-रोमावलि-लता
कलावालं कुण्डं कुसुमशर-तेजो हुतभुजः ।
रते-र्लीलागारं किमपि तव नाभिर्गिरिसुते
बिलद्वारं सिद्धे-र्गिरिशनयनानां विजयते ।।

*Sthiro gaṅgā'vartaḥ stana-mukula-romāvali-latā
kalāvālam kuṇḍam kusumaśara-tejo-huta-bhujah;
rater līlāgāram kim api tava nābhir giri-sute
bila-dvāram siddher giriśa-nayanānām vijayate.*

78 O Daughter of the Mountain! Indescribably unique is the glory of Thy navel, which is verily a still whirl-pool on the surface of the river Gaṅga; which forms the bed for the creeper of Thy Romāvali bearing two fruits in the shape of Thy breasts; which is the sacrificial pit wherein burns the fire of the prowess of Kāma Deva, the flower-arrowed god of love; which is the pleasure house of his wife Rati; and which forms the opening of the cavern wherein the eyes of Hara found the consummation of the great austerities he had performed.

79

The Devi's waist is now praised:

निसर्ग-क्षीणस्य स्तनतट-भरेण क्लमजुषो
नमन्मूर्ते-र्नारीतिलक शनकै-स्त्रुटयत इव ।
चिरं ते मध्यस्य त्रुटित-तटिनी-तीर-तरुणा
समावस्था-स्थेम्नो भवतु कुशलं शैलतनये ।।

*Nisarga-kṣīṇasya stana-taṭa-bhareṇa klama-juṣo
naman-mūrter nārī-tilaka śanakais truṭyata iva;
ciram te madhyasya truṭita-taṭinī-tīra taruṇā
samāvasthā-sthemno bhavatu kuśalam Śaila-tanaye.*

79 O Daughter of the Mountain! O Ornament of womankind! May safety be assured for Thy waist, which, being slender, is labouring under the weight of Thy breasts and therefore stooping, threatening to break under that weight, and whose precarious firmness is like that of a tree on a cracking river bank.

80

The three folds above the Devi's waist are now praised:

कुचौ सद्यः स्विद्य-त्तटघटित-कूर्पासभिदुरौ
कषन्तौ दोर्मूले कनककलशाभौ कलयता ।
तव त्रातुं भङ्गादलमिति वलग्नं तनुभुवा
त्रिधा नद्धं देवि त्रिवलि लवलीवल्लिभिरिव ।।

Kucau sadyaḥ svidyat taṭa-ghaṭita-kūrpāsa-bhid-urau
kaṣantau dormūle kanaka-kalaśābhau kalayatā;
tava trātum bhaṅgād alam iti valagnam tanubhuvā
tridhā naddham Devī trivali lavalī-vallibhir iva.

80 O Mother Divine! The three folds in Thy middle region look like three strands of Lavali creeper wound by Kāma Deva, the god of love, as a support to prevent Thy middle region from breaking under the weight of his creation, Thy quickly perspiring breasts, which (under the excitement of love for Śambhu) have swollen to the size of two golden pots, touching Thy arm pits and bursting the brassiere covering them.

81

The Devi's hips are praised:

गुरुत्वं विस्तारं क्षितिधरपतिः पार्वति निजा-
न्नितम्बा-दाच्छिद्य त्वयि हरणरूपेण निदधे ।
अतस्ते विस्तीर्णो गुरुरय-मशेषां वसुमतीं
नितम्ब-प्राग्भारः स्थगयति लघुत्वं नयति च ।।

Gurutvam vistāram Kṣiti-dhara-patiḥ Pārvati nijān-
nitambād ācchidya tvayi haraṇa-rūpeṇa nidadhe;
atas te vistīrṇo gurur ayam aśeṣām vasumatīm
nitamba-prāg-bhāraḥ sthagayati laghuttvam nayati ca.

81 O Parvati! Thy father, the Mountain-king, gave the weight and extensiveness of his flanks to Thee as dowry at the time of Thy marriage. It is for this reason that Thy hips, covering the earth, have become more extensive than it, and excelling it in weight, rendered it lighter in comparative weight.

82

The Devi's thighs are praised:

करीन्द्राणां शुण्डान् कनककदली-काण्डपटलीं
उभाभ्यामूरुभ्या-मुभयमपि निर्जित्य भवति ।
सुवृत्ताभ्यां पत्युः प्रणतिकठिनाभ्यां गिरिसुते
विधिज्ञे जानुभ्यां विबुध-करिकुंभ-द्वयमसि ।। ८२

Karīndrāṇām śuṇḍān kanaka-kadalī kāṇḍa-patalīm
ubhābhyām ūrubhyām ubhayam api nirjitya bhavatī ;
suvṛttābhyām patyuḥ praṇati-kaṭhinābhyām Giri-sute
vidhijñe jānubhyām vibudha-kari-kumbha-dvayam asi.

82 O Daughter of the Mountain! Thy thighs subdue by their beauty the trunk of lordly elephants as also the stem of golden coloured banana trees, while, O observer of all ordained duties, Thy knees, hardened and perfectly rounded by repeated prostrations to Thy Consort, rival the frontal globes of the heavenly Elephant Airavata.

83

The Devi's shanks are praised:

पराजेतुं रुद्रं द्विगुणशरगर्भौ गिरिसुते
निषङ्गौ जङ्घे ते विषमविशिखो बाढ-मकृत ।
यदग्रे दृश्यन्ते दशशरफलाः पादयुगली-
नखाग्रच्छद्मानः सुर-मकुट-शाणैक-निशिताः ॥ ८३ ॥

Parājetum rudram dviguṇa-śara-garbhau Giri-sute
niṣaṅgau jaṅghe te viṣama-viśikho bāḍham akṛta;
yadagre dṛśynate daśa-śara-phalāḥ pāda-yugalī-
nakhāgrac-chadmānaḥ sura-makuṭa-śāṇaika-niśitāḥ.

83 O Daughter of the Mountain! Surely the five-arrowed Kāmadeva has, in order to conquer Rudra, utilised Thy shanks as a quiver to store therein double the number of arrows he is credited with. For, at the end of Thy feet

are seen, under the guise of Thy toe nails, ten crescent-shaped arrow heads sharpened on the whetstone of the crowns of prostrating Divinities.

84

The glory of the Mother's feet is described:

श्रुतीनां मूर्धानो दधति तव यौ शेखरतया
ममाप्येतौ मातः शिरसि दयया धेहि चरणौ ।
ययोः पाद्यं पाथः पशुपति-जटाजूट-तटिनी
ययो-र्लाक्षा-लक्ष्मी-ररुण-हरिचूडामणि-रुचिः ।। ८४ ।।

Śrutīnām mūrdhāno dadhati tava yau śekharatayā
mamā'py etau Mātaḥ śirasi dayayā dhehi caraṇau;
yayoḥ pādyam pāthaḥ Paśupati-jaṭā-jūṭa-taṭinī
yayor lākṣā-lakṣmīr aruṇa-Hari-cūḍāmaṇi-rucih.

84 O Mother! The crest of the Veda (i.e. the Vedanta known as the Vedaśiras) bear Thy feet as its head ornament. Mayest Thou condescend to place those feet on my head too—the feet the water-offerings on which form the Gaṅgā in the matted locks of Śiva, and the bright red dye of which gives brilliance to the jewels on the diadem of Viṣṇu.

Notes: The idea is that Śiva and Viṣṇu prostrate at the feet of the Mother and place Her feet on their heads. In the process the water offerings that devotees are making at the feet of the Mother go to form Gaṅgā in the matted locks of the prostrating Śiva. So too it is the brightness of the lac

dye applied to the feet of the Devi that gives brilliance to the jewel on the prostrating Viṣṇu's diadem.

85

The Mother's feet are again praised:

नमोवाकं ब्रूमो नयन-रमणीयाय पदयोः
तवास्मै द्वन्द्वाय स्फुट-रुचिरसालक्तकवते ।
असूयत्यत्यन्तं यदभिहननाय स्पृहयते
पशूना-मीशानः प्रमदवन-कङ्केलितरवे ॥ ८५ ॥

Namo-vākam brūmo nayana-ramaṇīyāya padayos
tavāsmai dvandvāya sphuṭa-ruci-rasālaktakavate;
asūyaty atyantam yad abhi-hananāya spṛhayate
paśūnām īśānaḥ pramada-vana-kaṅkeli-tarave.

85 Our praise by way of obeisance to Thy feet, a delight to the eyes because of their brilliance arising from the liquid lac dye applied to them! Thy Consort Paśupati, desiring to be kicked with those feet, is extremely jealous of the Kankeli (Aśoka) tree of Thy pleasure garden, as that tree too is a rival aspirant for such kicks.

Notes: It is a fancy of Sanskrit poets that barren Aśoka trees flower if kicked by a woman of auspicious qualities classified as a Padminī. While the Devi is fancied as often kicking ihe Aśoka trees of Her pleasure garden for this purpose, Śiva is spoken of as envying them, as he desires such kicks to be administered to himself for the satisfaction of his amorous sentiments in love quarrels.

86

The feet of the Devi together with the anklet on it is praised:

मृषा कृत्वा गोत्रस्खलन-मथ वैलक्ष्यनमितं
ललाटे भर्तारं चरणकमले ताडयति ते ।
चिरादन्तःशल्यं दहनकृत-मुन्मूलितवता
तुलाकोटिक्वाणैः किलिकिलित-मीशान-रिपुणा ॥ ८६ ॥

Mṛṣā kṛtvā gotra-skhalanam atha vaiḷakṣya-namitam
lalāṭe bhartāram caraṇa-kamale tāḍayati te;
cirād antaḥ-śalyam dahana-kṛtam unmīlita-vatā
tulā-koṭī-kvāṇaiḥ kili-kilitam īśāna-ripuṇā.

86 O Devi! When Thou didst deliver a kick (in love quarrel) at the forehead of Thy Consort when he bent his head in shame for calling Thee inadvertently by the name of another woman, his enemy Kāma got an opportunity to root out of himself his long-standing rancour towards him, Īśa, for consuming him in fire, and he gave out his joyous acclamations, as it were, in the form of the tinkling of Thy anklets.

Notes: Kāmadeva (Cupid) and Śiva are enemies, because the latter once burnt the former in the fire emerging from his third eye for trying to induce love in his mind for Pārvati. The poet fancies that for this reason, Kāma had a long-standing rancour towards Lord Śiva. The poet fancies that the Devi once kicked at Śiva's forehead out of anger generated in a love quarrel. That amorous resentment in the Devi was caused because of Śiva inadvertently calling her by the

name of woman (Gaṅgā), who, the poet fancies, was occupying his mind. Realizing the blunder, Śiva hung his head in shame, and the Devi reacted by kicking at his forehead. In doing so her anklets produced profuse tinkling sounds, which the poet fancies to be the joyous acclamations of Kāma on having wreaked his vengeance on Lord Śiva.

87

In praise of the Devi's feet:

हिमानी-हन्तव्यं हिमगिरि-निवासैक-चतुरौ
निशायां निद्राणं निशि चरमभागे च विशदौ ।
वरं लक्ष्मीपात्रं श्रिय-मतिसृजन्तौ समयिनां
सरोजं त्वत्पादौ जननि जयत-श्चित्रमिह किम् ॥ ८७ ॥

Himānī-hantavyam hima-giri-nivās'aika-caturau
niśāyām nidrāṇam niśi carama-bhāge ca viśadau;
varam lakṣmī-pātram śriyam ati sṛjantau samayinām
sarojam tvad-pādau janani jayataś citram iha kim.

87 O Mother of the Universe! The lotus of Thy feet, which flourishes always on the snow Mountain (Himalayas), blooming night and day and bestowing undecaying wealth (Lakṣmī) on the inner circle of devotees, is undoubtedly far superior to the common lotus flower which perishes in snow, closes at night and forms the favourite resort of Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth whose blessings on devotees are very temporary).

88

The Devi's feet are praised again:

पदं ते कीर्तीनां प्रपदमपदं देवि विपदां
कथं नीतं सद्भिः कठिन-कमठी-कर्पर-तुलाम् ।
कथं वा बाहुभ्या-मुपयमनकाले पुरभिदा
यदादाय न्यस्तं दृषदि दयमानेन मनसा ।। ८८ ।।

Padam te kīrtīnām prapadam apadam Devi vipadām
katham nītam sadbhiḥ kaṭhina-kamaṭhī-karpara-tulām;
katham vā bāhubhyām upayamana-kāle purabhidā
yad ādāya nyastam dṛṣadi daya-mānena manasā.

88 The upper part of Thy feet are the seat of all excellences worthy of praise and they are the panacea for all dangers. How then do great poets equate them with the hard shell of a tortoise? And how did Thy Consort, the Destroyer of the Cities, in spite of all His tenderness towards Thee, have the heart to place them on a hard granite grinding stone at Thy marriage rite?

Notes: Sanskrit poets compare a well-formed fore-part of the feet of beautiful persons to the formation of the shell of the tortoise. Though such comparison is done in regard to the Devi's feet too, the poet-devotee fancies an inconsistency in such comparison as the tortoise shell is very hard and the Devi's feet are very tender and soft and form a centre of beneficence. The reference in the second half of the verse is to the rite of a bridegroom placing the feet of the bride on a granite pasting stone as a part of the marriage rite. The poet devotee, by way of praise of the Devi's feet, expresses

surprise that, Śiva, in spite of so much tenderness towards her, placed her very soft feet on a hard substance like a granite slab at the marriage rite.

89

Again the Devi's feet are praised:

नखै-र्नाकस्त्रीणां करकमल-संकोच-शशिभिः
तरूणां दिव्यानां हसत इव ते चण्डि चरणौ ।
फलानि स्वःस्थेभ्यः किसलय-कराग्रेण ददतां
दरिद्रेभ्यो भद्रां श्रियमनिश-मह्नाय ददतौ ॥ ८९ ॥

Nakhair nāka-strīṇām kara-kamala-samkoca śaśibhis
tarūṇām divyānām hasata iva te caṇḍi caranau;
phalāni svaḥ-sthebhyaḥ kisalaya-karāgreṇa dadatām
daridrebhyo bhadrām śriyam aniśam ahnāya dadatau.

89 O Candị! Thy feet, of the moon-like nails, which **make the lotus-bud-like palms of adoring heavenly damsels close, do shower abundant wealth quickly on humble and poor devotees, and thus mock at the wish-yielding Kalpaka trees of heaven whose arms of tender branches bestow desired gifts only to Devas who live in heavenly affluence.**

Notes: At moon-rise lotus flowers close. The poet compares the toe nails of the Devi to the moon and the hands of celestial women adoring Her to lotus flowers,. While thus adoring, the celestial women close their lotus-like palms in salutation, and the poet fancies that this is due to the proximity of the moon-like nails of the Devi, as lotus flowers do at moon-rise. Her feet with moon-like nails are pictured

also as casting ridicule on the Kalpaka tree for its bestowing felicities on people who are already well-placed and have plenty of enjoyments, while Her feet bestow blessings on humble and poor devotees.

90

The devotee expresses his aspiration to dwell at the Mother's feet for all time.

ददाने दीनेभ्यः श्रियमनिश-माशानुसदृशीं
अमन्दं सौन्दर्य-प्रकर-मकरन्दं विकिरति ।
तवास्मिन् मन्दार-स्तबक-सुभगे यातु चरणे
निमज्जन् मज्जीवः करणचरणः षट्चरणताम् ॥ ९० ॥

Dadāne dīnebhyaḥ śriyam aniśam āśānusadṛśīm
amandam saundarya-prakara-makarandam vikirati;
tav'āsmin mandāra-stabaka-subhage yātu caraṇe
nimajjan majjīvaḥ karaṇa-caraṇaḥ ṣaṭ-caraṇatām.

90 Thy feet form a veritable bunch of Mandāra flowers dripping the honey of beauty and are a liberal supplier of wealth to Thy poor devotees. May my spirit with its six organs of knowledge (including the mind) become a six-footed honey-sucking bee at those feet for ever more.

Notes: The poet sees a comparison between his spirit which has six organs of knowledge (including the mind) and a honey-sucking bee which too has six organs in the form of six legs. He also expresses his aspiration to get fully absorbed in the contemplation of the Mother's feet as the honey bee in sucking the honey.

91

The Devi's gait is praised:

पदन्यास-क्रीडा-परिचय-मिवारब्धु-मनसः
स्खलन्तस्ते खेलं भवनकलहंसा न जहति ।
अतस्तेषां शिक्षां सुभगमणि-मञ्जीर-रणित-
च्छलादाचक्षाणं चरणकमलं चारुचरिते ॥ ९१ ॥

Pada-nyāsa-krīḍā-paricayam iv'ārabdhu-manasaḥ
skhalantas te khelam bhavana-kala-hamsā na jahati;
atas teṣām sikṣām subhaga-maṇi-mañjīra-raṇitac-
chalād ācakṣāṇam caraṇa-kamalam cāru-carite.

91 O Goddess of Holy Fame! The royal Swans inhabiting Thy residence are never abandoning their pursuit of Thee, in their effort to observe Thy gait for correcting their own defective ways. And Thy lotus feet are, it seems, giving instructions to them in the guise of the tinkling sounds made by the anklets on them, studded with precious stones.

92

The supremacy of the Devi over all deities is stated:

गतास्ते मञ्चत्वं द्रुहिण-हरि-रुद्रेश्वर-भृतः
शिवः स्वच्छ-च्छाया-घटित-कपट-प्रच्छदपटः ।
त्वदीयानां भासां प्रतिफलन-रागारुणतया
शरीरी श‍ृङ्गारो रस इव दृशां दोग्धि कुतुकम् ॥ ९२ ॥

Gatās te mañcatvam Druhiṇa-Hari-Rudr'eśvara-bhṛtaḥ
śivaḥ svacchac-chāyā-ghaṭita-kapaṭa-pracchada-paṭaḥ;
tvadīyānām bhāṣām prati-phalana--rāg'āruṇatayā
śarīrī śṛṅgāro rasa iva dṛśām dogdhi kutukam.

92 Thy servitors Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Īśvara have taken the shape of Thy cot (i.e. the four legs of the cot) in order to serve Thee very closely, while Sadasiva has formed himself into Thy bedsheet, reflecting Thy crimson glory in his assumed whiteness, thereby causing amazement to Thee by presenting Himself as the very embodiment of erotic sentiment.

Notes: Śiva's white foım, representing Sattva-guṇa, is called 'assumed' because as the Impersonal Being, He is without any Guṇa. Whiteness, representing Sattva-guṇa, is only something assumed for creative purposes. But in the creative cycle Śakti overpowers His whiteness by Her crimson radiance, representing Rajas. Thus the dominance of Śakti in the creation cycle is again asserted. The five Deities forming the support of the Devi's seat and thus attending on Her are called the *Pañca-pretas*, the Five Dead.

93

A total description of the Devi's form is given:

अराला केशेषु प्रकृतिसरला मन्दहसिते
शिरीषाभा चित्ते दृषदुपलशोभा कुचतटे ।
भृशं तन्वी मध्ये पृथु-रुरसिजारोह-विषये
जगत्त्रातुं-शंभो-र्जयति करुणा काचिदरुणा ॥ ९३ ॥

Arālā keśeṣu prakṛti-saralā manda-hasite
śirīṣābhāi citte dṛṣad upala śobhā kuca-taṭe;
bhṛśam tanvī madhye pṛthur urasij'āroha-viṣaye
jagat trātum śambhor jayati karuṇā kācid aruṇā.

93 Thus for the welfare of the worlds abides in all Her glory Aruṇā (Kāmeśvarī), the Śakti of Śambhu the very embodiment of graciousness—with her locks all curly, her smile naturally artless, her heart soft like Śirīṣa flower, her breast as tight and hard like a grinding stone, her waist extremely slender, and her hips and breasts generous in size.

94

Moon, an object of beauty in Nature, is depicted as a toiletry canister of the Devi.

कलङ्कः कस्तूरी रजनिकर-बिम्बं जलमयं
कलाभिः कर्पूरै-र्मरकतकरण्डं निबिडितम् ।
अतस्त्वद्भोगेन प्रतिदिनमिदं रिक्तकुहरं
विधिर्भूयो भूयो निबिडयति नूनं तव कृते ॥ ९४ ॥

Kalaṅkaḥ kastūrī rajani-kara-bimbam jalamayam
kalābhiḥ karpūrair marakata-karaṇḍam nibiḍitam;
atas tvad-bhogena prati-dinam idam rikta-kuharam
vidhir bhūyo bhūyo nibiḍayati nūnam tava kṛte.

94 The mark on the moon is musk; and her watery disc, a receptacle (canister) of emerald for containing pieces of camphol in the form of the digits of the moon. As and when the contents of that receptacle are exhausted by Thy

using them, Brahmā fills it up day by day for Thee with the digits of the waxing moon.

Notes: The phenomenon of the waning and waxing of the moon is cleverly utilised by the poet to indulge in a poetic fancy that the purpose of this natural phenomenon is to provide the Devi with a fragrant substance for Her toilet. Thus Nature is made to subserve a Divine purpose. The moon is the watery canister, and the digits of the moon, waxing and waning in the course of two fortnights, are identified as pieces of white fragrant camphol contained in that canister for the Devi's toilet. It is fancied that the waning of the moon is caused by the Devi making use of the camphol pieces of moon's digits for Her toilet, and when they are exhausted, Brahmā fills them with camphol as the waxing moon.

95

The sanctity of the Devi's feet is described:

पुराराते-रन्तःपुरमसि तत-स्त्वच्चरण्योः
सपर्या-मर्यादा तरलकरणाना-मसुलभा ।
तथा ह्येते नीताः शतमखमुखाः सिद्धिमतुलां
तव द्वारोपान्त-स्थितिभि-रणिमाद्याभि-रमराः ॥ ९५ ॥

Pur'ārāter antaḥ-puram asi tatas tvac-caraṇayoḥ
saparyā-maryādā tarala-karaṇānām asulabhā;
tathā hy'ete nītāḥ śatamakha-mukhāḥ siddhim atulām
tava dvār'opānta-sthitibhir aṇim'ādyābhir amarāḥ.

95 Thou art the Consort of the Destroyer of the Cities, residing in His inner apartment, to which votaries with

unregenerate mind find no entry and are therefore denied the privilege of the immediate worship of Thy feet. It is therefore that all the Deities headed by Indra have by their unparalleled austerities been able only to attain to Anima and other psychic powers (Siddhis) which are but Thy gate keepers (being only peripheral to Thee and far removed from Thy innermost attributes).

Notes: Just as only very close relatives have access to the inner apartments occupied by women, only devotees of the highest order can worship the Mother directly in the Sahasrāra. The deities like Indra with great powers are considered exalted beings by ordinary people. But they are not. They have access only to the gate of the Mother's residence, as they are but manifestations of the Siddhis (psychic powers), which are only peripheral to the Devi's divine majesties. They are far inferior to the real devotees who alone can be close to Her. They are in a way inferior even to the psychic powers personified as deities. These Divine majesties of the Devi, though peripheral, are always there. But Indra and other Devas are only temporary power manifestations, as they are eliminated when their term ends.

96

The Devi is exalted as the embodiment of chastity:

कलत्रं वैधात्रं कतिकति भजन्ते न कवय:
श्रियो देव्या: को वा न भवति पति: कैरपि धनै: ।
महादेवं हित्वा तव सति सतीना-मचरमे
कुचाभ्या-मासङ्ग: कुरवक-तरो-रप्यसुलभ: ॥ ९६ ॥

Kalatram vaidhātram kati kati bhajante na kavayaḥ
śriyo devyāḥ ko vā na bhavati patiḥ kairapi dhanaiḥ;
mahādevam hitvā tava sati satīnām acarame
kucābhyām āsaṅgaḥ kuravaka-taror apy asulabhaḥ.

96 O Chastity Emobodied! How numerous are the poets who have courted and attained Sarasvatī, **the consort of** Brahmā **and the deity of learning and fine arts! So also who with some wealth fails to become the Lord of** Śrī (Śrīpati), **the consort of** Viṣṇu **and the goddess of wealth! But, O the foremost of** Chaste Ones! **None besides** Śiva **the** Great God,**–not even the tree called** Kuravaka, **has ever had the embrace of Thy breasts.**

Notes: It is a belief that the Kuravaka tree will flower only if it is embraced by a beautiful woman. Though the embracing of such an inanimate object is of no consequence from the point of view of chastity, the poetic fancy finds a breach of the rules of chastity even in such contacts. Besides this, the poet tries to depict the uniqueness of the chastity of Pārvati, the Consort of Śiva, by slighting that of Sarasvati and Lakṣmi. Any one who attains poetic gift by the Japa of Mantras etc. is called a '*Sarasvatī-vallabha*' (dear one of Sarasvati), and any rich man is called '*Lakṣmī-pati*' (lord of Lakṣmi). So these deities are supposed to have consorted with other persons and thus lost their chastity.

97

The all-comprehensive uniqueness of Tripurasundari is here asserted:

गिरामाहु-र्देवीं द्रुहिणगृहिणी-मागमविदो
हरेः पत्नीं पद्मां हरसहचरी-मद्रितनयाम् ।
तुरीया कापि त्वं दुरधिगम-निस्सीम-महिमा
महामाया विश्वं भ्रमयसि परब्रह्ममहिषि ।। ९७ ।।

Girām āhur devīm Druhiṇa-gṛhiṇīm āgamavido
hareḥ patnīm padmām Hara-sahacarīm adri-tanayām;
turīyā kāpi tvam duradhigama-niḥsīma-mahimā
mahā-māyā viśvam bhramayasi parabhrahma mahiṣi.

97 O Consort of Parabrahman! The scholars who know the real meaning of the Āgamas (scriptures) describe Thee as Sarasvatī, **the Goddess of Learning and the Consort** of Brahmā. Besides, they speak of Thee as the lotus-born Lakṣmī, **the Consort of Viṣṇu, as also as the Daughter of the Mountain (Pārvatī) and the Consort of Hara** (Śiva). **But Thou art however the Fourth (the unique Power that is the source of the three Deities mentioned) of inconceivable and limitless majesties—the indeterninable** Mahāmāyā **who revolves the wheel of this world.**

Notes: By describing the Devi as the Fourth (Turīyā) and the Consort of Parabrahman (Parabrahma-mahiṣi), it is indicated that the Devi invoked here is the uninvolved and unaffected Power and Substance that has actually become manifestated as conscious and unconscious principles, including Divinities like Sarasvatī, Śrī, Pārvatī etc. How She can at the same time be uninvolved and unaffected and yet actually become all these manifestations is a mystery impossible for the human mind to conceive. So She is described as Mahā-Māyā

(the great and mysterious Power) and *duradhi-gamana-nissima-mahimā* (one of unfathomable and limitless greatness).

98

The devotee prays to the Mother to generate poetic genius in him.

कदा काले मातः कथय कलितालक्तकरसं
पिबेयं विद्यार्थी तव चरण-निर्णेजन-जलम् ।
प्रकृत्या मूकानामपि च कविता-कारणतया
कदा धत्ते वाणीमुखकमल-ताम्बूल-रसताम् ।। ९८ ।।

Kadā kāle mātaḥ kathaya kalit'ālaktaka-rasam
pibeyam vidyārthī tava caraṇa-nirṇejana-jalam;
prakṛtyā mūkānām api ca kavitā-kāraṇatayā
kadā datte vāṇī-mukha-kamala-tāmbūla-rasatām.

98 O Mother! Tell me when I, a seeker after wisdom, shall have the privilege of imbibing the red-tinged water with which Thy lac-painted feet have been washed, —water that can generate poetic genius even in a naturally dumb person. **When shall I expect it (that red-tinged water) to flow out of my mouth as great poetry, which forms the chewed betel leaf juice of** Vāṇī, (Sarasvatī), **the Goddess of Learning and** Poesy?

Notes: The reference to the 'chewed betel leaf juice of Sarasvati' means 'when will Sarasvati Herself speak through the devotee's mouth? i.e. when will he gain the summit of wisdom and poetic gift?' It is asserted that the water with which the Mother's feet has been washed has the potency to confer this gift.

Tradition says that in the temple of Mūkāmbikā, not far from Mangalore, a dumb devotee was turned into an eloquent poet by drinking the Caraṇāmṛta, the water with which the Devi's feet were laved. Again in the Kāmākṣi temple in Kāñcipuram another dumb devotee tasted the betel juice from the Devi's mouth and thereby became famous as Mūkakavi who has composed a magnificent hymn of 500 verses on Kāñci Kāmākṣi known as *Mūka pañcaśati.*

99

It is now stated how the true worshipper of the Devi is blessed with all the good things of life and also attains the supreme bliss of liberation while living.

सरस्वत्या लक्ष्म्या विधि-हरि-सपत्नो विहरते
रतेः पातिव्रत्यं शिथिलयति रम्येण वपुषा ।
चिरं जीवन्नेव क्षपित-पशुपाश-व्यतिकरः
परानन्दाभिख्यं रसयति रसं त्वद्भजनवान् ॥ ९९ ॥

Sarasvatyā Lakṣmyā Vidhi-Hari-sapatno viharate
Rateḥ pātivratyam śithilayati ramyeṇa vapuṣā;
ciram jīvann eva kṣapita-paśu-pāśa-vyatikaraḥ
parā'nand'ābhikhyam rasayati rasam tvad bhajanavān.

99 O Mother! A devotee of Thine sports with Sarasvatī **(learning) and** Śrī **(Wealth), and thus courts the jealousy of their consorts,** Brahmā **and** Viṣṇu. **By the charm of his body, he attracts the attention of Rati, the wife of** Kāma **Deva (the god of love), and thus violates her chastity. And with the beginningless ignorance-born bondage of** Jīvāhood

broken, he is immersed in the supreme Bliss of Brahman even in this long-lived embodied state.

Notes: The verse states that the Devi awards to a true devotee of Hers learning, prosperity, charm of personality, longevity and bliss of spiritual realisation.

100

In concluding the hymn the poet-devotee propounds the grand idea of the all-inclusiveness of the Divine.

प्रदीप-ज्वालाभि-र्दिवसकर-नीराजनविधिः
सुधासूते-श्चन्द्रोपल-जललवै-रर्घ्यरचना ।
स्वकीयैरम्भोभिः सलिल-निधि-सौहित्यकरणं
त्वदीयाभि-र्वाग्भि-स्तव जननि वाचां स्तुतिरियम् ॥१००

Pradīpa-jvālābhir divasa-kara-nīrājana-vidhiḥ
sudhā-sūteś candropala-jala-lavair arghya- racanā;
svakīyair ambhobhiḥ salila-nidhi -sauhitya- karaṇam
tvadīyābhir vāgbhis tava janani vācām stutir- iyam.

100 Just as doing Nīrājana (light waving ceremony) to the sun is only the offering of his own light to him; just as making an offering of Arghya to the moon with the water that oozes out of the moon-stone in contact with moon light, is only to give back what belongs to the moon, and just as making water-offering (Tarpaṇa) to the ocean is to return what belongs to it—so is, O Source of all Learning, this hymn addressed to Thee composed of words that are already Thine.

ADDENDA

Lakṣmīdhara accepts only the hundred verses of the Text as the genuine composition of Sri Śankarācārya. But there are three more verses included in the Texts accepted by some other commentators. They incorporate them as Nos. 94, 99 and 102 of the hymn, thus making the Text a hymn of 103 verses. These verses are given below under the serial numbers of 1, 2 and 3.

समानीतः पद्भ्यां मणिमुकुरतामम्बरमणि-
र्भयादास्यादन्तःस्तिमितकिरणश्रेणिमसृणः ।
दधाति त्वद्वक्त्रप्रतिफलनमश्रान्तविकचं
निरातङ्कं चन्द्रान्निजहृदय-पङ्केरुहमिव ।। ९४ ।।

Samānītaḥ padbhyām maṇi-mukuratām ambaramaṇir
bhayād āsyād antaḥ-stimita-kiraṇa-śreṇī-masṛṇaḥ;
dadhāti tvad-vaktra-prati-phalanam aśrānta-vikacam
nirātaṅkam candrān nija-hṛdaya-paṅkeruham iva.

1 The sun has assumed the form of a mirror carved out of crystal for Thee to rest Thy feet upon, having withdrawn his rays lest they should burn Thy face. In that mirror constituted of the sun is reflected Thy face, which is, as it were, one with the sun's heart-lotus wherein Thou art present. But being in the Devi's presence, that heart-lotus never closes before the moon (like ordinary lotus flowers).

समुद्भूतस्थूलस्तनभरमुरश्चारु-हसितं
कटाक्षे कन्दर्पाः कतिचन कदम्बद्युति वपुः ।
हरस्य त्वद्भ्रान्तिं मनसि जनयन्ति स्म विमला
भवत्या ये भक्ताः परिणतिरमीषामियमुमे ।। ९९ ।।

Samudbhūta-sthūla-stana-bharamuraś cāru-hasitam
kaṭākṣe kandarpāḥ katicana kadamba-dyuti vapuḥ;
harasya tvad-bhrāntim manasi janayanti sma vimalā
bhavatyā ye bhaktāḥ pariṇatir amīṣām iyam ume.

2 A chest adorned by well-developed breasts, a sweet smile, side-glances revealing the graces of the god of love, a frame as handsome as the Kadamba tree—these features of Thine, O Uma, the attainment of which is the consummation of all Thy true devotees also, only help to throw Hara, Thy Consort, into confusion (as He cannot distinguish Thee in the assembly of such intimate devotees who have attained oneness of form with Thee).

निधे नित्यस्मेरे निरवधिगुणे नीतिनिपुणे
निराघाटज्ञाने नियमपरचित्तैकनिलये ।
नियत्या निर्मुक्ते निखिलनिगमान्तस्तुतपदे
निरातङ्के नित्ये निगमय ममापि स्तुतिमिमाम् ॥

Nidhe nitya-smere niravadhi-guṇe nīti-nipuṇe
niraghāṭajñāne niyama-para-cittaika-nilaye;
niyatyā nirmukte nikhila-nigamānta-stuta-pade
nirātaṅke nitye nigamaya mam'āpi stutim imām.

1 O My Treasure! O Goddess with an ever-smiling face! O Centre of Infinite Excellences! O Expert in doing what is right and just! O Source of unfailing wisdom! O the Sole Resort of men with well-controlled minds! O Freedom's haven! O the object adored of all the Vedas! O Faultless one! O Eternal Being! Deign to sanctify this, my hymn of praise.

APPENDIX-I

Sṛṣṭi-Cakra and Samhāra-Cakra

The latter is described as follows in *Subhagodaya of Gauḍapāda*

बिन्दु त्रिकोण-वसुकोण-दशारयुग्म-
मन्वश्र नागदल-संयुत-षोडशारम् ।
वृत्त-त्रिभूपुर-युतं परितश्चतुर्द्वाः
श्रीचक्र-मेत-दुदितं परदेवतायाः ॥

Bindu-trikoṇa-vasukoṇa-daśāra-yugma-
manvaśra-nāgadula-saṃyuta-ṣoḍaśāram
vṛtta-tribhūpura-yutam paritaś caturdvāḥ
Śrī-Cakram etad uditam paradevatāyāḥ

"The Bindu (dot), around it the central triangle, around it eight angles, around it two series of ten angles, around it one series of fourteen angles, around it a lotus with eight petals, around that a lotus with sixteen petals, three circles surrounding it, and boundary enclosure with four openings — thus is described the Śrī-Cakra of the Supreme Divine." Such is the description of Samhāra-Cakra in the *Subhagodaya,* an authoritative text on the subject by Gauḍapāda. The speciality of the Samhāra-Cakra is that the Bindu is in a central triangle, and among the two sets of intersecting triangles, the four upright ones are Śiva triangles and the five triangles with downward angles are Śakti triangles. For fuller details, on this and on the Sṛṣṭi-Cakra, see verse 14 of the text and the comments on it, beside referring to the illustrations given in the same place. The chief difference is that in the Sṛṣṭi-Cakra the Bindu is in a central quadrilateral and that the Śiva triangles are the four pointing downward and the Śakti triangles, the five pointing upwards. In the Samhāra-Cakra the central dot (Bindu) is in a central triangle with the apex downward, and the Śiva triangles are the four upright ones and the Śakti triangles the five with apex downward.

APPENDIX-II

ANATOMICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF RAJA YOGA

DR. J. K. SARKAR

All orthodox systems of Indian philosophy have one goal in view; the liberation of the soul from all bondage and sorrow. The method of attaining this is known as Yoga.[1] There are four main types of Yoga of which Raja Yoga is the subject of our discussion here. The central principle of Raja Yoga is the attainment of liberation by the direct control of the mind. Mind is generally regarded as a form of subtle matter. But in Raja Yoga mind is regarded as a form of energy radiated by the Self. This 'consciousness-energy' (*cit-śakti*) is known as Prana. All mental and physical activities are believed to be energized by Prana. But out of the sum total of Pranic energy only a small portion takes a kinetic form as psycho-physical energy. The rest of the Prana remains dormant or 'coiled up' and is known as Kundalini. The locus of Kundalini is the region at the base of the spine. The method of Raja Yoga is to awaken this dormant Pranic energy. The awakened Kundalini rises through six Cakras or centres.. When it finally reaches the centre in the brain, the mind attains its fullest development, the soul becomes omniscient and is liberated from all bondage and sorrow for ever.

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1 The word 'Yoga' is derived from two roots one meaning 'concentration' and the other meaning 'union'—union of the individual self with the Supreme Self. Patanjali uses Yoga only in the first sense of concentration. But in Raja Yoga, which is a branch of Tantra Sastra, 'Yoga' means both concentration and union.

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O Daughter of the Mountain of Snow! The greatest of poets like Brahma - in trying assiduously to portray Thy beauty, fail to find any other object to describe it through comparison... Thy Eternal Consort Siva has the privilege of absorption in Thy beauty, and oneness with Him alone can help one experience it.

– Page, 55


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